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## **CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE INFORMATION BRIEFING**

**Meeting to be held on Wednesday 15 June 2022**

**This briefing will only be debated if a member of the Committee requests a discussion be held, in which case please inform the Clerk 24 hours in advance indicating the aspects of the information item you wish to discuss. In addition, questions on the briefing should also be sent to the Clerk at least 24 hours before the meeting.**

### **QUESTIONS ON THE INFORMATION BRIEFING**

The Briefing comprises:

- 1 BROMLEY ALL AGE AUTISM STRATEGY 2022-2027 (Pages 3 - 50)**
- 2 CONTRACTS REGISTER (Pages 51 - 60)**
- 3 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE ADVISORY GROUP (CSCPAG) ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 61 - 70)**

Members and Co-opted Members have been provided with advanced copies of the Part 1 (Public) briefing via email. The Part 1 (Public) briefing is also available on the Council website at the following link: <http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=559&Year=0>

Printed copies of the briefing are available to Members and Co-opted Members on request by contacting Kerry Nicholls on 020 8461 7840 or by e-mail at [kerry.nicholls@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.nicholls@bromley.gov.uk).

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# All-Age Autism Strategy

2022 to 2027

## Footnote

Throughout this strategy, the term a 'person with autism' is used. It is recognised that when describing people there is no single term that everyone prefers. Other labels will include terms like 'Autistic' and 'Autism Spectrum Condition' (ASC), whereas medical terminology has historically used 'Autism Spectrum Disorder' (ASD).

Locally we prefer to talk about the person, their strengths, wishes and goals before any condition. Our communities use a variety of positive terminology and language - we recognise it's an individual's preference as to their identity.

There are also references to language such as 'neurodiverse' or 'neurodivergent' that celebrates neurodevelopmental conditions which cover an umbrella of conditions including autism.

We celebrate and champion difference in all our community. Whilst we aim through this strategy to be the voice of our autism community, these terms are merely to ensure the wider population understands who in the community this strategy is referencing.

**Please note:**

All the photos in this document are stock imagery.

Some percentages will add up to more than 100% due to rounding.

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## Foreword

The aim of the strategy is to support people with autism and their families or carers, living and working in the borough. We want them to have full access to educational, work and leisure opportunities so that they can play their full role within society.

On behalf of the London Borough of Bromley and the NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (Bromley), the Bromley All-Age Autism Board is delighted to present this All-Age Autism Strategy for the borough, which sets out local priorities for people of all-ages with autism in Bromley.

This strategy has two main aims:

- To ensure there's equality of access to universal services for people with autism
- To ensure specialist services can support people with autism

It has been informed by the views of:

- individuals with autism
- their families, carers and friends
- providers
- our local priorities
- national guidance, policy and legislation

The vision in this strategy is to:

“enable people with autism to live their lives as they choose, as part of their community, with the right support at the right time”

Through our engagement with residents, families, carers, and local professionals a set of five priority areas has been identified to help us deliver our vision:

1. Increase awareness and understanding
2. Build sustainable education placements
3. Support independence and employment
4. Reduce health and care inequalities
5. The right support at the right time

This strategy will be delivered via an accompanying action plan, updated yearly to ensure local priorities are met over the next five years. Priority leads will be identified from across services and the community to drive and deliver positive change.

All organisations involved in developing and implementing this strategy are committed to ensuring that the vision and priorities will be delivered across the next five years.

Over the five years, the offer will be developed with our public sector agencies and our local communities. Continued improvement to the wellbeing of residents will be driven forward, promoting early intervention, prevention, independence, flexibility and choice, supporting local community-based solutions that will supplement and extend the core offer.

The development of the strategy has centred around the involvement of people with autism, their families, and carers. The implementation of the strategy will continue by growing the partnership network and engaging the community services as much as possible to ensure that Bromley is a place that is aware, accepts and supports all its diverse community.

**Jason Rose**

Chair of our Bromley All-Age Autism Board

## Introduction

The Government published the new National Autism Strategy in July 2021 which covers people of all-ages in England for the first time.

In Bromley there has been a focus on improving outcomes for people with autism through the Bromley All-Age Autism Board and its supporting action plan since 2018. The Board is multi-agency with representation from services across education, health and care together with parents, carers and partners in the voluntary and community sector. It brings together a shared investment to bring about positive change and the voice of our autism community.

This strategy:

- has been driven by the Bromley All-Age Autism Board
- outlines the commitment in Bromley to do more to help people with autism
- sets out the objectives and strategic direction across the local area over the next five years
- has been co-produced with people with autism, their families and carers, and professionals across social care, health, education and the voluntary and community services

The strategy is aligned to key priorities across the borough, including:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Vision and Priorities for 2019 to 2022, Our Journey to Excellence
- The NHS South East All-Age Autism Strategy for 2021 to 2026
- The Council's corporate strategy for 2021 to 2031, Making Bromley Even Better

It is also aligned to key national legislation and policy.

What's more, this strategy has been developed alongside the borough's Learning Disability Strategy for 2020 to 2025 which supports an estimated 15 to 30% of the autism community who also have a learning disability.

For the large proportion of the autism population who live without a learning disability, it is recognised that this strategy must champion their voice for improvement. The aim is that changes promoted by this strategy will benefit people with autism and other neurodivergent people, whether or not they have a formal autism diagnosis.

The governance and accountability of this strategy is overseen by and aligned to the Bromley All-Age Autism Board, the SEND Governance Board and the Integrated Commissioning Board.

We want to ensure that through the delivery of the strategy people with autism, and their families and carers, develop a clear understanding of how and where improvements are being made. We want them to see where their voice and participation is directly influencing positive change. This is a key element of our User Voice Framework.

## Understanding autism

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world.

One in 100 people are on the autistic spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK. Autism is a spectrum condition and affects people in different ways - like all people, autistic people have their own strengths and weaknesses.

Historically there have been a number of different names given at the point of diagnosis. An individual may have received a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome, classic autism or even high functioning autism. Nowadays there is one diagnosis/description given and that is Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

***Image:** The Autism spectrum with five labels – motor skills, language, perception, executive functioning and sensory skills.*

In order to receive a diagnosis of ASD a person will need to present with differences in the areas of:

- Social communication and social interaction
- Repetitive and restrictive behaviours

Autistic people may also be over- or under-sensitive to sensory stimulation – or fluctuate between the two. They may be highly focused on particular interests and hobbies and many report struggling with high anxiety levels, especially in social situations.

Boys and men are more likely to receive a diagnosis than girls and women and the ratio is thought to be three to one. Girls and women may present differently to boys and men and are known to mask their challenges, especially in social situations.

We know that not all autistic people have had or would like a diagnostic assessment. The aim is that changes promoted by this strategy will benefit the autistic community as a whole and other neurodivergent people, whether or not they have a diagnosis.

## Neurodiversity

Neurodevelopmental conditions (neurodiversity) are caused by differences in early brain development and can affect the way a person processes information, thinks and learns. Autism is one such condition.

Other conditions include specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Tourette Syndrome.

Autistic people may have additional learning disabilities, and this accounts for 15 to 30% of the population.

### Under the neurodiversity umbrella

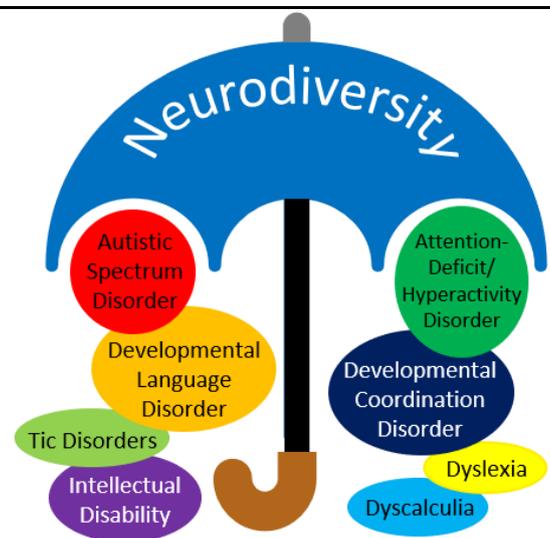
Neurodiversity is a relatively new term, thought to have been coined in the 1990s by Judy Singer, an autistic individual, parent of an autistic child and sociologist.

It was originally used by the autistic community, who were keen to move away from the medical model and dispel the belief that autism is something to be 'treated' and 'cured', rather than an important and valuable part of human diversity.

The idea of neurodiversity has now been embraced by many other groups, who are using the term as a means of empowerment and to promote the positive qualities possessed by those with a neurodevelopmental difference.

It encourages people to view neurodevelopmental differences as natural and normal variations of the human genome. Furthermore, it encourages them to reject the culturally entrenched negativity which has typically surrounded those that live in, learn from and experience the world in a particular way that is sometimes perceived as different.

**Image:** Open umbrella with the following labels underneath - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Developmental Language Disorder, Tic Disorders, Intellectual Disability, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Developmental Coordination Disorder, Dyslexia, and Dyscalculia.



## Employment

Autistic people process the world around them differently and this often gives them areas of particular strength and ability, such as strong attention to detail, honesty and punctuality. Despite this very few autistic adults enjoy full-time paid work.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published data that shows only 22% of autistic adults are in any kind of employment.

## **Co-occurring conditions**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) estimates that around 70% of autistic people have an additional condition, which is “often unrecognised”.

The main conditions that co-occur more frequently in people who have autism compared with the general population can include:

### **Mental health conditions**

Research suggests that 70% of people with autism have a mental health condition and that 40% have two or more conditions.

### **Emotional health**

People with autism are up to four times more likely to have anxiety, and are twice as likely to have depression.

### **Negative life experiences**

Research has shown that people with autism are more vulnerable to negative life experiences, which may also impact mental health.

### **Lower quality of life**

Compared to the general population, people with autism report having a lower quality of life.

## **A picture of Bromley**

National data suggests that an estimated 700,000 people have been diagnosed with autism in the UK, with an estimated prevalence of 1 in every 100 children and 2 in every 100 adults.

*Image: Illustration of Bromley borough with neighbouring local authority areas labelled (Kent and Surrey; Bexley, Croydon, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark)*

Based on this national prevalence data, we can make informed estimations about the numbers of people with autism in Bromley. There are an estimated 333,000 people currently living in Bromley. Using the national ratios, we estimate that almost 6,000 people with autism live in our borough of which:

- 5,300 are autistic adults (aged 16 and over)
- 700 are autistic children and young people (aged from birth to 15 years old)

Those children and young people who have complex needs will often require an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. Using this data, we can identify the number of children in our school settings who are eligible for an EHC Plan and whose primary need is related to autism. Based on this data, we know that 4 in 10 children with an EHC Plan have a primary need linked to autism. This forms the most prevalent primary need:

- 22% have a primary need of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- 21% have a primary need of Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

For those children and young people receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support in Bromley school settings, this rises to 4.7 in 10 children (31% have SLCN and 16% have an ASC).

Just over 300 adults with autism in our borough are known to the Council's Adult Social Care Service. Of these, we know that 95% (286) are aged from 16 to 64 years old, compared to 15 people who are aged 65 and over. This could indicate areas of our community that are not diagnosed who are managing within society and who may have wellbeing needs.

From other national data, we know that 15% to 30% of our autism population will also have a learning disability – some 900 to 1,800 people. These people will be supported through Learning Disability services and their strategy.

National data tells us that 75% of working age adults are in employment. This compares with 52% of those with general disabilities and just 22% of the autism population. Therefore, a key focus for our borough is to support people to bridge these significant gaps of independence by enabling autistic people to access training, employment, and career opportunities.



## Our approach

The strategy has two clear aims which will help us to achieve our vision and support us to help people with autism to play their full role within our society.

The two aims are:

- To ensure equality of access to universal services for people with autism
- To ensure specialist services can support people with autism

We want to identify autistic people's needs earlier, improve their physical and mental health and better understand the inequalities people with autism face.

## Why do we need this strategy?

Autistic children, young people and adults, and their families and carers, have told us that there are currently significant barriers to achieving our vision across the service system and the wider community.

Addressing these barriers will require a better understanding of autism along with cultural change across both services and our local community. These are not quick adjustments to make, but we know that with focused leadership across the system over time, autistic children, young people and adults can be supported to achieve better life outcomes.

The work of this strategy will need to be embedded in our organisations and the wider community so that it is sustained and can be built on. We are committed to bringing the right people together to break down barriers to community access and use our resources effectively to deliver the support that people need.

Our strategy is here to focus the action of all the partners across Bromley who will work together to make the changes we need to see.

## **Engagement conversations to develop this strategy**

The last two years have been a period of comprehensive and sustained engagement with our autism community to ensure as many views and ideas as possible have contributed to this strategy. Over 530 individuals have contributed their views to help form this strategy.

This has incorporated:

### **The 100-day Bromley Autism challenge**

This involved over 100 individuals from across education, health and social care, people with autism and their families expressing their views about the key issues and subsequent priorities for children and young people with autism aged from birth to 25 years old.

### **The voice of the adult**

To help us better understand the voice of adults with autism in the borough, a series of engagement events took place across the local area to allow young people, adults with autism, their families and carers to share their lived experiences in relation to the national all-age autism priorities. This included specific events for parents and carers as well as a focus group session for people with autism.

### **The voice of the child**

Young advisors from one of our local partners, CASPA, have contributed towards the strategy by advocating for Bromley's autistic community by directly sharing their experiences, ideas and expertise.

The group provides a valuable insight into their world and how Bromley can lead the way in making autistic voices heard. The Young Advisors have relished the opportunity to help 'change the rulebook' in order to make our community more inclusive. As members of the Bromley All-Age Autism Board, they have had the opportunity to showcase their skills and develop their confidence.

The clear message from their engagement with other children and young people with autism was that more support was needed for autistic young people and adults, especially regarding employment, mental health, social connection and independence.

### **Capturing wider feedback**

To support the engagement events, a questionnaire was circulated by partners across the borough. This was aimed at identifying further intelligence about the lived experience of autistic

people of all-ages and their families. The questionnaire was produced in an easy read format to make it as accessible as possible.

52 people responded to the survey. Of these:

- 52% were parents or family members
- 35% were an autistic person
- 10% were professionals
- 2% were carers
- 2% were unknown

By analysing their responses, we identified:

### **Receiving the right support at the right time**

- 78% (of 47 responses) said they had a difficult experience due to lack of support at the right time.
- 73% (of 45 responses) said they had received positive support within the community.
- 44% (of 41 responses) said they have had positive experiences where a Bromley education setting has enabled their child or young person with autism to access the right support.

### **Find the right employment opportunity**

- 26% (of 34 responses) said they had a positive experience into employment.
- 33% (of 33 responses) said they had difficulties finding a job and within employment.

### **Receiving the best health and care support**

- 18% (of 32 responses) said their health and care needs were being met.
- 22% (of 40 responses) said they had received support from inpatient mental health services.
- 78% (of 38 responses) said they needed support with their mental health.
- 25% (of 40 responses) said they had received input from the police and wider criminal and youth justice services.

## **Local developments**

With our joint local authority and NHS approach we have been able to develop our services to be more inclusive for the community, with positive local initiatives that will provide a strong foundation for the strategy to grow.

Some of these include:

## **Bromley All-Age Autism Board**

The Bromley All-Age Autism Board was formed following real success in raising the profile of autism amongst our children and young people services. Despite the pandemic this has grown over the past couple years and formed an all-age focus. With Board members and autism representatives we have an action plan which drives improvements led by professionals, who make positive changes in their service areas.

## **Autism Education Trust (AET)**

The AET started in early 2022 following a drive to improve awareness, understanding and outcomes within education for our students with autism. AET is supported by the Department for Education with programmes that offer professionals training, practical tools and a wealth of free resources to better support autistic children and young people across all education settings. It also uses frameworks and standards to support culture change within Headteachers and senior school leaders. This will see positive changes amongst approaches to supporting students, enabling them to remain in the education setting and support their wellbeing.

## **Autism Family Support Service**

The services provided by Bromley Mencap have offered critical family intervention support. Following engagement with families the service has grown and there is now an autism family support co-ordinator that supports low level intervention and signposting to all services across the borough. If families need more intensive support, they can be triaged to a further 6 to 8 weeks of intervention. Families can move between services as and when they need to.

## **Autism Champions Development Network**

Professionals in the Autism Champions Development Network work together to develop their school-based practices and provisions. Any professional in a school can join the network and can access, free of charge, fortnightly e-Digests and termly Development Network Forums. Autism Champions and Sencos can also access a comprehensive range of produced and sourced autism resources, as well as Autism Supportive Schools reviews.

## **CASPA**

CASPA began supporting children and has grown over the years to provide support to people of all-ages with autism, their families and their carers. Their support ensures people with autism are fulfilling life aspirations, including social, leisure, relationships, support into employment and more. They have also worked closely with the Board to drive the voice of autism and improvements as representatives, including towards this strategy.

## **Bromley Autism Promise**

The Bromley Autism Promise is an initiative driven by the Board in early 2020. It was designed to improve awareness and understanding within community services and organisations, including public services, leisure centres and retail spaces. Organisations are supported to reflect on the service they provide whilst also being supported to make positive changes to their environments, programmes, workforce and employment. They may also receive autism training.

## **Bromley Well**

Bromley Well was launched in October 2017 to help people living in Bromley to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing. They have recently employed an Autism Specific Information and Support Officer to help drive continued improvements for our autism community.

## Our vision and priorities

We want Bromley to be a place that offers opportunities for people to live healthy and fulfilling lives, where contributions to local communities are welcomed, supported and valued, and where no-one is left behind.

These opportunities should extend to all people in Bromley with autism, including those without a diagnosis.

### Our vision

The vision of this strategy is to:

“enable people living in Bromley with autism to live their lives as they choose, as part of their community, with the right support at the right time”

### Our five priorities

Through our engagement conversations, a set of five priority areas has been identified. These are based on the views and feedback we have received that have helped to develop an understanding of what needs to change or improve to make Bromley more aware and inclusive, and open opportunities for our people with autism.

The five priorities are:

1. Increase awareness and understanding
2. Build sustainable education placements
3. Support independence and employment
4. Reduce health and care inequalities
5. The right support at the right time

### Delivering the priorities

The strategy will be delivered through the Bromley All-Age Autism Board's Action Plan. Throughout all five priorities the actions outlined in the *What we need to do?* sections will be delivered over the next five years. We will achieve this by creating SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals with priority leads and teams identified from across services and the community. There are some areas of work that straddle more than one priority, and there are some themes that cross all priorities.

We recognise that over the five years of this strategy, further needs may arise and can be added as part of the Bromley All-Age Autism Board's Action Plan.

# Priority 1 - Increase awareness and understanding

## Theme 1 – Understanding

### What people have told us

There is a lack of understanding of people with autism in our families, across our communities and in services.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- grow our community's understanding of autism and other neurodiverse conditions so they can better support people with autism.
- help our professionals, services and local businesses to -
  - feel able to recognise differences and know how best to support people with autism
  - identify where they can make changes to their service delivery to make them inclusive, accessible and helpful to our autistic community

### What we need to do

We need to:

- identify those services within our community that need to become autism aware and inclusive so that they can appropriately support people with autism
- identify a sustainable neurodiversity training offer, including Autism Awareness, for our front-line staff and services to help grow understanding and skills for our workforce to support its community
- identify a training offer with partner organisations focused on how we work together to raise the profile and awareness of neurodiversity, including autism, within workforces and the people they support
- increase participation in the Bromley Autism Promise which supports commercial and community businesses to be more aware and welcoming and to offer opportunity to its community

## Theme 2 – Self-awareness

## What people have told us

People with autism need help to understand themselves, how their autism affects them and what things can help them in their life.

## What we want to achieve

We want to:

- support people with autism to understand what their autism means to them, their strengths, and skills, so that they can live fulfilling lives.
- make sure our families and carers have access to guidance and advice to enable them to best support their family or person with autism.
- design our services to recognise the support families and carers provide.
- help our families and carers feel knowledgeable and empowered to support their loved ones throughout all stages of their lives.
- raise awareness across services to support professionals to recognise when a person with autism may need support or advice and guidance to achieve their aspirations
- students with autism to be supported to understand what their autism means to them, their strengths and skills, so that they can live fulfilling lives.

## What we need to do

We need to:

- continue engagement with our families and carers living with autism to understand what advice, guidance and support they need so they can influence the strategy, year upon year, to better develop services to meet the borough's needs

## Theme 3 – Information

### What people have told us

People with autism, their families and professionals across Bromley don't know what services and support is available to people with autism across the community.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- know how and where to access information that provides help and guidance

- make sure that our front-line support staff have all the information and guidance required to inform their roles supporting our autism community to provide appropriate support

## **What we need to do**

We need to:

- improve information, guides and general content (including online) to make it more relevant for all people with autism, incorporating pictures, symbols and easy read formats
- roll out a communications campaign across the Bromley All-Age Autism Board partners with the purpose of signposting, accessing support, advice and guidance across all our universal offer and specialist services for autism
- consider how we ensure that information is truly accessible and understood by all people with autism across all partners, including the use of easy read formats and those using non-verbal communication
- review our current information and service advice including directories to ensure, where possible, information can be found easily and all in one place.
- support professionals to build a good knowledge of services available and guide people with autism to appropriate support
- support organisations to look at how accessible their information and advice is to our autism community
- provide clear and accessible advice and guidance to families and carers to signpost support, including our commissioned partners and businesses.

## **Theme 4 – Training**

### **What people have told us**

Front-line and back-office staff need to be better trained on the needs of autistic people.

### **What we want to achieve**

We want to:

- grow our community's understanding of neurodiversity to support professionals to recognise difference and know how best to support individuals
- celebrate where organisations have supported the autism community, recognising how they achieved success and encouraging them and other organisations to replicate those methods

### **What we need to do**

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We need to:

- work in partnership to better advertise specialist services that offer training, support, advice and guidance for people with autism
- identify gaps in our training offer and quality assure training delivered through the SEND Training Collaborative with a focus on Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Teacher Training, providing an emphasis on every teacher being a teacher of SEND.

## **Theme 5 – Adaptations**

### **What people have told us**

Services need to make better adaptations and adjustments to their services to meet the needs of people with autism.

### **What we want to achieve**

We want to:

- highlight the difficulties some people with autism face that prevent them from accessing services, such as difficult environments like public transport and health appointments, so we can consider how we can adjust to provide better access and outcomes for this group

### **What we need to do**

We need to:

- focus on how services are commissioned with autism in mind and how they are designed to support and meet the needs of our autism community
- identify how and where building a partnership approach across the universal offer, specialist services and other organisations will help each other in championing neurodiversity, including autism
- continue to grow the Autism Champion network, to expand our champions' knowledge, and to maintain e-communications to highlight key developments, research and evidenced-based strategies and interventions

## **Read more**

Read all the things that we were told in Appendix A.



## Priority 2 - Build sustainable education placements

### Theme 1 – Understanding

#### What people have told us

People working in education settings need a better understanding of autism and its impact on the learning of both children and adults with autism.

#### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- reduce the number of students with autism that have failed placements and recognising the impact of Positive Demand Avoidance (PDA) on accessing education.
- education settings to be inclusive, accessible and able to support their students with autism to reach their full potential
- professionals within schools to grow knowledge and skills that help them to identify individual needs within students

#### What we need to do

We need to:

- roll out the Autism Education Trust (AET) programmes across all years' education facilities - early years, schools and post 16 – by using the AET frameworks (including the Standards and Competencies) to support individual development of professionals, focus on whole setting development and culture change and progress support through individual pupil development.
- grow the knowledge and understanding of autism through our Champions within education settings.

### Theme 2 – Support

#### What people have told us

People working in education settings should improve their knowledge of autism so they can identify children with undiagnosed autism as early as possible and offer the right tailored help and interventions to meet their holistic needs.

## **What we want to achieve**

We want to:

- support and reduce the negative impact a student's mental health has on their education, including those masking their issues within school.
- our education settings to identify neurodiversity within their students from as early as possible
- education settings to share where they have had successes in their approach and support
- our education settings' staff to identify individual needs early, through appropriate training, including students masking issues
- staff within our partner settings are skilled and equipped with the knowledge to support our students with autism

## **What we need to do**

We need to:

- develop a free school to meet local needs, to include our Bromley Autism Centre of Excellence, which will ensure we continue to provide improvements and provision as our borough's needs change.
- Centre of Excellence to become a place for all providers, services and support groups to build a community-led autism support hub.
- identify within existing resources how we develop awareness and approaches for an autism support and training offer for students with autism which is relevant and proportionate to their individual needs.
- explore the link between autism and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) to support Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSLs), Special Educational Needs Coordinators (Sencos) and Mental Health leads to intervene early, using the Mental Health leads network to support EBSA as an agenda item.

## **Theme 3 – Social**

### **What people have told us**

People working in education settings, particular mainstream, should make better use of things that can help people with autism, including social groups, safe spaces and break/lunchtime activities.

## **What we want to achieve**

We want to:

- create a culture change programme within our education settings that will ensure we have long-term positive education experiences for students with autism.
- develop a local education provision able to meet the growing autism population's needs.
- strengthen our long-term planning within our education settings to enable students with autism to achieve in school.

## **What we need to do**

We need to:

- consider the individual needs of a student through the AET programme to support professionals to understand how environmental changes and adjustments to the day including support can enable that student to achieve and reach their full potential.
- support education settings via the Autism Education Trust (AET) to work with heads and senior leadership teams to identify a culture change programme, focused on early intervention and prevention, supporting student's welfare and achievement within education.

## **Theme 4 – Aspirations**

### **What people have told us**

People with autism should be supported to fully understand their educational pathway and how this can help them to achieve their aspirations for their adulthood.

### **What we want to achieve**

We want to:

- ensure each student's skills and strengths are identified and we support the student to identify their needs in order to reach education and life goals
- ensure there is sufficient information and guidance supporting our students through transition years, beyond education into adulthood.

### **What we need to do**

We need to:

- increase the use of person-centred planning tools to support transition and build on strengths towards further education and employment.
- ensure our Preparing for Adulthood pathway equips young people with the appropriate skills they need to fulfil their adult life goals.
- use the AET schools and Post 16 framework to identify how we enable professionals to support a student to reflect, not just upon their needs within education but also for the future, into further education and employment.

## Read more

Read all the things that we were told in Appendix A.

# Priority 3 – Support independence and employment

## Theme 1 – Independence

### What people have told us

People with autism don't understand what support and options are available to help them to live independently.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- support people with or without autism diagnoses to build their independence.
- focus our support on achieving levels of independence which is tailored to the person's wishes and aspirations.
- make sure our community and services can efficiently support people with autism on their life journey.
- support everyone with or without an autism diagnosis through our universal offer.
- help our partner organisations to advocate for their autism community by looking at roles within their organisation.
- encourage employer organisations to work with schools and colleges so that employment opportunities/pathways are accessible.
- expand the number of autism confident employers in our borough.
- make our services and pathways clear for people with autism.

### What we need to do

We need to:

- promote our specialist services and community organisations offering individualised support focused on building knowledge and independence.
- look at how we offer advice and guidance across services that support people with autism to ensure it will help build knowledge and independence, such as life skills, communication, relationships, managing finance, housing, independent living skills and employment.
- work closely with learning disability services to ensure people can access the support they need to build or maintain independence, including support into employment.

- build a skills and strengths model across organisations that supports looking at the individual before their autism.
- set up an autism ambassador group to review the online downloadable resources and leaflets to ensure the service offer and access information is clear and understood, including easy read or other formatting where required.
- support our Autism Ambassadors to identify where support for people with autism isn't clearly defined within our service offer and then identify how we can advertise this support better.
- ensure any gaps that are identified by the Autism Ambassadors are shared at the Bromley All-Age Autism Board.

## Theme 2 – Opportunities

### What people have told us

People with autism not in employment need better advice and support to help them find the right job for them.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- increase the number of people with autism into meaningful employment.
- celebrate and learn from successful employment of people with autism.
- share examples of good practice across employer organisations.
- promote an inclusive, workforce first approach to support culture change across workforces.
- promote clear information and guidance on the support and services on offer to our people with autism looking to build their independence, open opportunities within employment or otherwise.

### What we need to do

We need to:

- support organisations to look at a strengths approach to autism specific roles and schemes through employment projects, including 100-day challenge and Bromley Autism Promise, to lead towards employment such as voluntary, apprenticeships, supported internships and graduate schemes, as well as part- or full-time employment.
- identify how we deliver partnership working with employment services to better understand and support our neurodiverse/autism community looking for work so we can make the process a positive experience.

- review where employment is working well for those people with autism to understand what support they received, where reasonable adjustments have supported the employee and how the employer supports them to remain in work.
- raise the importance of employment among strategic boards to understand the role our organisations can have and look to identify ways to deliver an employment programme which should empower employers to understand and support the employees' needs in order to meet their roles and job specification.
- use the Bromley Autism Promise to explore where there may be opportunity to build and support employment opportunities.
- work with partners to identify an opportunity to make a central autism focused hub for all services to advertise their support/offer, which could sit within the Autism Centre of Excellence offer.

## **Theme 3 – Adjustments**

### **What people have told us**

Employers need a better understanding of autism and the things they can put in place to support their employees with autism.

### **What we want to achieve**

We want to:

- help adults in work to know where they may turn to get support, either within their peers, in human resources or from external support, including mental health and wellbeing support.
- work with businesses to build autism awareness, which can lead to sustaining employment for its workforce with autism.
- build a greater understanding across the community of the skills and strengths of people with autism.
- build an inclusive approach to employment projects with businesses, including looking at how roles can be adapted through job carving or adjustments that support positive employment experiences.

### **What we need to do**

We need to:

- build a training offer that supports building understanding in businesses and organisational changes and approaches to employing people with autism, including how their workforces can support their people with autism.

- grow the Bromley Autism Promise training offer to support organisations to be aware, understand difference and neurodiversity and support their autism workforce.

## Read more

Read all the things that we were told in Appendix A.

# Priority 4 – Reduce health and care inequalities

## Theme 1 – Tailoring

### What people have told us

Appointments for health and care services should be better tailored for those with autism.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- identify issues early and provide support and advice before ending up at crisis.
- support families and those with family members who have complex needs to identify adjustments needed for them to access appointments.
- look at how health appointments can be adjusted to make them inclusive for the person with autism, as well as beneficial for families to be able to confidently communicate their needs and wishes.
- support reasonable adjustments to healthcare appointments for our autism community to access timely advice and appointments.

### What we need to do

We need to:

- identify, where it's appropriate within individual settings such as GP/A&E, dental etc., changes that will benefit our people with autism, such as environment changes, appointment adjustments, online offer, separate waiting areas and information and guidance available before and after health appointments.

## Theme 2 – Pathways

### What people have told us

Waiting times for diagnosis and specialist services are too long.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- identify how we can support our autism community to recognise and communicate when they are not able to access appointments.
- improve the waiting times for autism diagnosis, advice and guidance of diagnostic pathway and the support available throughout the process and post-diagnosis
- understand the demand on services across all-ages and the growing autism population.
- recognise the changing picture of autism diagnosis, including reports of underdiagnosis within girls.

## What we need to do

We need to:

- review how we currently provide diagnostic support services, to understand how we are able to reduce waiting times for diagnosis and offer timely support interventions such a triage service.
- review current guidance around the pathway for diagnosis (all-ages), support available, the expected time frames for each process, and support or signposting upon diagnosis, including considering the clarity of information, use of easy read format, pictures, symbols etc.
- look at how we create support and interventions along service pathways to avoid a person hitting crisis - in particular young people preparing for adulthood.
- identify nationally where diagnosis processes differ, what's working well elsewhere and if replicating it locally would have a positive impact.
- look at how we develop wellbeing and mental health support alongside existing services, focused on timely support or signposting to avoid crisis - often people need to understand where support is available now rather than sit on waiting lists.

## Theme 3 – Comorbidity

### What people have told us

Support for children with autism and mental health difficulties needs to be improved.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- support the increased issues and service pressures around the wellbeing and mental health needs of young people preparing for adulthood and in transition years, as too many mask their issues in settings.

- train professionals to identify low level mental health concerns including those masking within education or services.
- support people of all-ages to identify what they might need, as often a person's wellbeing and mental health needs are overlooked.
- build appropriate support for mental health provision.

## **What we need to do**

We need to:

- Identifying when they may have wellbeing needs that could impact negatively now or in the future.
- identify where wellbeing needs have significant impact on a person at stages of their life
- review the mental health support and training offer around autism, continuing to grow the knowledge of front-line professionals, education settings and services to recognise wellbeing decline, and those masking issues - in particular, those in preparing for adulthood transition years.

## **Read more**

Read all the things that we were told in Appendix A.

# Priority 5 - The right support at the right time

## Theme 1 – Strengths-based

### What people have told us

Support for people with autism should be better tailored to their needs, wishes and aspirations.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- help people with autism to identify their skills, strengths and their needs, including when they may have wellbeing needs that could impact negatively now or in the future.
- identify where wellbeing needs have a significant impact on a person at stages of their life.
- make sure that our services provide support to people of all-ages as and when they need it throughout their lives, that recognises and is built on individuality.
- support our services to identify those who may not be eligible for statutory support but who may run into trouble without intervention, where possible.

### What we need to do

We need to:

- support people with autism to identify their skills, strengths and their needs.
- identify those who may not be eligible for statutory support but who may run into trouble without intervention, where possible.
- continue to improve signposting and guidance around interventions and where to access support for all-ages.

## Theme 2 – Model

### What people have told us

People with autism need better continuity from professionals and services who are working with them.

## What we want to achieve

We want to:

- provide information, advice and guidance including where and how this support can be assessed, as we recognise that clear information and guidance is key to support positive family environments and avoid crisis.

## What we need to do

We need to:

- build, within models of health and social care services, an offer that has clear guidance and is accessible, including to those that wouldn't meet thresholds for statutory services.
- coproduce a model of early intervention support that will run across all our services, connecting and signposting to ensure we prevent a person, their family or carer entering decline and provide them access to timely support.
- look at our models of service - how do we ensure appropriate preparation for appointments, to make sure they are meaningful, and priority/action led for all involved.
- continue to build an appropriate short break offer that can meet the individual's and family or carer's needs.

## Theme 3 – Influence

### What people have told us

The families of people with autism need better support which is focused on helping them.

### What we want to achieve

We want to:

- ensure appropriate and timely support for families and carers.
- support families to plan to avoid crisis.
- review the current ways in which health services are offered following resident engagement, to identify if there are other ways in which a service can be accessed or provided in order to make them more inclusive.

### What we need to do

We need to:

- continue to work with partners through boards and engagement as a tool to change services to meet current and future wellbeing and mental health needs.
- continue engagement or use of groups and ambassadors to provide feedback on how services should provide information and guidance.
- look to advertise and where possible support family, parent and carer groups, ensuring our community can talk to others with lived experience and support each other.
- continue with our engagement with family, carers, parents and people with autism to ensure their lived experience is driving changes across all services in the Council and health, including the voluntary and public sector.
- feedback all local developments and changes to services through the delivery of the NHS long term plan into the Bromley All-Age Autism Board's action plan, to keep local people informed.
- explore through engagement with families where reasonable adjustments may be required, so we can better understand how these adjustments can be made by each service

## Read more

Read all the things that we were told in Appendix A.

## Appendix A – What people have told us

### Priority 1 - Increase awareness and understanding

- “If you are an autistic adult without a learning disability, there is a lack of understanding across all service providers (public and private) about how your needs are different from most people.”
- “Training professionals who need to know how to respond to those with autism.”
- “More awareness and training, particularly engaging business leaders as they are responsible for creating cultures and environments.”
- “It’s the healthcare professionals, security guards, police and social workers that need to understand me and my autism.”
- “The Police were very supportive but took a long time to respond which caused a lot of anxiety.”
- “Training for police, security guards etc, on how to deal with situations where an autistic person is having issues to ensure that they don’t inadvertently make the situation worse.”
- “Often people don’t understand and think you are being difficult or strange and it’s hard to explain why a person with autism struggles sometimes with the smallest change.”
- “Expecting that people with autism can easily travel etc, I think other methods should routinely be offered such as video call or telephone calls.”
- “We are not supported by our community; we don’t have a clear understanding of the support and resources available.”
- “We need to improve education of autism, inform people, help them understand.”
- “I don’t understand what I need, someone needs to help me identify my needs and advise me what support I could receive.”
- “I struggle with lots of text, a lot of my autistic friends do to. We need consideration for easy read and bullet pointed text to make it easier to read and understand.”
- “Housing is a massive issue for people with mental health or autism, where’s the support for higher functioning autistic people to help understand.”
- “Few professionals have understanding how adjustments are needed for some people with autism.”
- “As a professional working with neurodiverse young people, I feel I have a duty to provide an environment that is neurodiverse aware and inclusive. For all workers to have positive training.”
- “The social workers could change/ leave and move at difficult times e.g., just before going to the Panel for approval, for a placement or completing the information for panel.”
- “Some social workers are living out of the area or move on from cases quickly and have no knowledge or experience of local placements suitable to meet complex needs.”
- “Ensure that anyone offering any kind of service - shops, schools, hospitals, transport, police, Bromley Council - all have proper training on autism...especially adults with autism.”

- “Bromley Recovery College (offers workshops and courses which enable students to achieve a greater insight into their own mental wellbeing) – we need to get more out there so we can learn more.”
- “I need help understanding how my autism impacts on me compared to neurotypical people.”
- “More awareness of neurodiversity among older people and those without a diagnosis.”
- “I think families should all be informed about different kinds of neurodiversity and not just the families affected.”

## Priority 2 - Build sustainable education placements

- “There should be some understanding of neurodiverse presentation, there might be some severe areas of difficulty often not supported.”
- “More staff training in education settings.”
- “Earlier observation by professionals in schools.”
- “Work more closely with schools to signpost resources and support.”
- “Schools truly understanding what is required and not being scared to do the right thing by individuals.”
- “Schools work very well with people with autism.”
- “Support for families whose child is presenting with a PDA profile who experiences issues accessing their education.”
- “No support for me whilst I was studying for my degree. I wanted to learn about people so that I could get on better. This is where I discovered that I had autism.”
- “More educating children of their autism from at least the age of 7.”
- “Someone to talk & somewhere to go in school breaks means anxiety is significantly lowered.”
- “The awareness and openness of staff can and has made a positive education experience.”
- “The school offer support and social groups, children can feel understood, safe and achieve.”
- “Education is key - people have religious education yet we learn nothing about disabilities and autism - we need to understand it’s impact on individuals, education and their families.”
- “Autism doesn’t need to be recognised by a diagnosis. So many students are struggling with autism or neurodiverse conditions, this will only increase as we understand more about autism.”
- “I struggled with depression for a short time in secondary school, the doctor just thought my autism is the reason for not being liked. We need more understanding and guidance from these professionals.”
- “When diagnosed we need support groups for mainstream education settings that support understanding of communication, social skills, friendships etc.”
- “More early intervention prior to diagnosis - more training of boys and girls masking at school.”
- “Teachers tried to limit my aspirations. I had no structure or guide preparing me so that once out of education I knew what to do with my life.”

## Priority 3 – Support independence and employment

- “Living in social housing has impacted on my mental health. I am high functioning and living independently but wish that the services I work with could be more understanding of my individual need.”
- “Support throughout school enabled my child to achieve their goals, move onto higher education and gain their chosen job.”
- “Job centre experience was awful. It was overwhelming with too many sensory issues.”
- “Everyone with Autism is different- if you employ people on the spectrum, it will help others with Autism feel supported, whilst growing understanding in the workforce.”
- “Diversity and inclusion for Neuro diverse adults in the workplace to be included in solving the problem.”
- “Ensure sufficient educational support and job opportunities.”
- “We need to get employers to really define Reasonable adjustments for people with disability or Autism.”
- “Employer who has taken the time and initiative to research Autism and what an Autistic person might need, then speaking with the individual to ensure everything is appropriately put in to place for them to achieve and carry out their role.”
- “Continuing support once in work e.g., meetings, someone to talk to about issues, someone to guide clearly on what to do.”
- “Adjustments should be for the individual, not generic.”
- “Due to the lack of understanding in many 'normal' workplaces, they have been unable to sustain employment, something they very much want to be able to do.”
- “The Jobcentre Plus (JCP) seem very confused about their approach, providing Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) - which is meant to be intensive employment support, but contact once a month by phone. This isn't supportive, the types of appointments need to be flexible without threats of sanctions (losing benefits).”
- “I used to have a job, I worked on areas outside my Job description, I wasn't paid well, I ended up having mental health issues for two and half years, I lost confidence, now I need more support to build confidence and get back to work.”
- “I've had support given to find job but nothing after, there can be issues in work and it can be hard to keep a job sometimes.”
- “I don't understand about housing types, benefits, and money, I need support.”
- “Maybe having a generalised system, a main online source for Autism across the borough- information/website/all links for services/ social media/ Apps.”
- “Any advertisements, events or services need to use inclusive pictures, symbols and easy read text particularly in Local authority papers/newsletters.”

## Priority 4 – Reduce health and care inequalities

- “In my experience there are no specialists who can help, unless you are prepared for a 2-year waiting list. System is discriminatory for those that have autism along with other conditions.”
- “If there is a 3-month list for those with mental health, this should be the same for those with autism and mental health issues. Good looks like equality.”
- “Ensuring that the local community paediatric service offer a sensitive approach to assessment, where parents are not expected to speak in front of their child about their difficulties, if they don't feel this is helpful.”
- “Services understanding how the presentation of girls on the spectrum can be vastly different to boys and many difficulties masked, so they become extremely vulnerable to internalising and having mental health difficulties. A diagnosis for these children can be extremely important.”
- “I don't understand the Support through the diagnostic pathway.”
- “Bromley Y and CAMHS waiting lists are too long to cope with the huge influx of need since Covid. More triage services needed.”
- “If would have been nice to not feel neglected once I turned 18.”
- “We want choice to group our appointments together or have them all separate.”
- “Don't book appointment's during school or time's when I have routine, they need to ask me, it can mess me up for days.”
- “Awareness training for GP and health service receptionists, I feel a lack of patience and understanding can make me more anxious, I can't get support when I'm unable to manage my anxiety.”
- “Separate area in GP surgeries and hospital waiting rooms for people with autism. On sensory level, building of anxiety, difficulty waiting or simply the whole situation can be daunting.”
- “It's very difficult to access services as my child was told they would need to attend, which can be extremely difficult.”
- “Please can we consider home appointments if the person is non-verbal with very high communication difficulties and support needs. Sometimes getting to appointments is impossible and health risks can be missed.”

## **Priority 5 - The right support at the right time**

- “The world would be a different place without people with autism. But a lack of support for those with autism, we need to recognise that there are different groups of people with very different needs.”
- “We should be focusing on the person at the time and not in the past. Assessments should focus on the present and future and what that person needs to get there.”
- “When diagnosed later as adult which happens a lot, we need support in varying areas including social skills and how to keep job.”
- “I've had a positive experience of Young Offender's Service (YOS), generally very understanding.”

- “I’ve sensory issues and not understanding my needs and what support I need. More sensory classes and awareness even for adults and those high functioning.”
- “In terms of mental health services - having autism is a barrier - if you present with autism and a co-morbid mental health issue - no one will help you.”
- “I had some bad experiences with my son and mental health services. Professionals are all lovely and helpful but if a person is autistic, they do not have the resources available to them, to help. We had to go to private services to get the help needed.”
- “Important that person with complex needs would benefit from the continuity of the same people throughout the transition processes and into the first 6 months in a setting.”
- “It’s easier having one person to support me than many in one go (like a carer, Social Worker, advocate, or Health professional).”
- “We had so many social workers, it was a very difficult transition. My son was 18/19 years. Continuity would have made so much difference.”
- “Where does autism fit? - if you don't have a learning disability lots of services can't help you. I get help with other issues - but not the autism element.”
- “Later in life or when young, we need support learning about autism. We need social skill groups, money groups, assistance into work groups, anxiety groups, support groups.”
- “We need continuing help like in mental health services; autism just isn’t understood.”
- “I live alone, have no support but need weekly support with my autism.”
- “As a carer I feel like the professional hasn't read the notes. Then don't feel like we get what we need from a meeting.”
- “Need for short breaks, our parents and siblings sometimes need this, it provides healthy time apart as well as build independence for our loved ones away from home environment.”
- “Any support has had to be fought for.”
- “Assessing effective family support across the borough and what that looks like.”
- “The whole process of supporting family through school into adulthood puts a lot of pressure on families, we need support for parents and siblings.”
- “Counselling for families including siblings.”
- “Bromley Parent Voice have been very supportive.”
- “Support for parents so they aren't so overwhelmed.”
- “Signposting is really required. From what procedure the diagnosis will follow to what special facilities there are for children by age group. There are so many gaps, which causes anxiety for the parent.”

## Appendix B - Useful resources

### The law (Legislation and Statutory Guidance)

- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [The Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Autism Act 2009](#)
- [Statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the adult autism strategy](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#)

### National strategies and policies

- [National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026](#) (published 2021)
- [Autism strategy implementation plan: 2021 to 2022 \(Annex A\)](#) (published 2021)
- [NHS Long Term Plan: Learning disability and autism](#) (published 2019)
- [Think Autism](#) (published 2014)
- [Fulfilling and Rewarding lives: the strategy for adults with Autism in England](#) (published 2010)

### National resources and research

- [Office of National Statistics: Outcomes for disabled people in the UK](#) (published 2021)
- [Local Government Association: Housing Sensory needs considering and meeting the sensory needs of autistic people in housing](#) (published 2020)
- [Left Stranded: The impact of coronavirus on autistic people and their families in the UK](#) (published 2020)
- [The Autism Act, 10 Years On: A report from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism on understanding, services and support for autistic people and their families in England](#) (published 2019)
- [The Autism Self-Assessment Framework](#) (published 2016)
- [NICE guidance and quality standards: Autism](#)
- [National Autistic Society](#)

### Local resources (strategies, policies and research)

- [Our Journey to Excellence: SEND Vision and Priorities for 2019 to 2022](#)
- [The NHS South East All-Age Autism Strategy for 2021 to 2026](#)

- [Making Bromley Even Better, the Council's corporate strategy for 2021 to 2031](#)
- [Better Together: SEND engagement framework](#)
- [Tackling Loneliness: A strategy for Bromley 2022 to 2026](#)
- [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Bromley](#)
- [Autism Care Pathway in Bromley 18+: A report by Healthwatch Bromley](#)

## Appendix C - Timeline of national Autism legislation and policies

- 2009 – [The Autism Act 2009](#) guaranteed the rights of autistic adults in England.
- 2010 – The Autism Act 2009 led to the first national autism strategy, called '[Fulfilling and Rewarding lives: the strategy for adults with Autism in England](#)'.
- 2010 – The Government published '[Statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the autism strategy](#)'.
- 2014 – A review of the Autism Act 2009 led to an update of the strategy, called '[Think Autism](#)'
- 2015 – The Government published '[Statutory guidance for local authorities and NHS organisations to support implementation of the adult autism strategy](#)'.
- 2016 – Public Health England published '[The Autism Self-Assessment Framework](#)' to help local authorities to self-assess their implementation of the Adult Autism strategy locally.
- 2019 – Autism was included as a priority in [NHS England's Long-Term Plan](#) to make sure that NHS England plans how to provide better healthcare for autistic people.
- 2019 – The Department of Health and Social Care committed to refreshing the 'Think Autism' strategy and extend scope to all-ages as part of a '[Review of the National Autism Strategy 'Think Autism': call for evidence](#)'.
- 2021 – Leading on from NHS England's Long-Term Plan, the [NHS South East All-Age Autism Strategy for 2021 to 2026](#) was produced in regional collaboration to define the priorities for the next five years for the NHS in the south east.
- 2021 – The [National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026](#) was published, supported by an additional plan which outlines the first two years for implementation (2021 to 2022).

## Appendix D - Impact of COVID-19

We've produced this strategy at a time when the world is moving from a global pandemic to an endemic and where the lives of people living in the UK have been adversely affected and changed.

As we transition into the 'new normal', we have to consider and remember the impact of this pandemic on our children and adults with autism, their families and carers, and our professionals.

Throughout the pandemic we've seen increased concerns and issues with some of the population's wellbeing and mental health. We also saw changes to the life circumstances of individuals across our borough due to a lack of support networks or, sadly, due to loss of life to family or friends.

We know that some people have found social distancing and a reduction in interaction extremely welcoming. Therefore, they have embraced the new way of living where society has become digitally ready, which makes some interaction a more positive experience, with flexibility to have meetings at suitable times.

Those travelling to employment or education settings, coupled with the social pressures and sensory environments, have found the pandemic has had a positive impact upon them individually due to the nature of their work or studies being online, from their safe home environment. Some have reported this as the happiest and most productive they have been in years.

Some people have found access to particular services difficult, particularly health services, due to the impact of the pandemic and the limiting of access to health professionals at this time.

Whilst we're witnessing and anticipating increased need for services and support locally, both short- and long-term planning and intervention is required. The effects of the pandemic will be felt across our society for many years to come. Some of this impact is currently unknown and it may be difficult to identify and capture the ongoing needs in this strategy at this time. However, this strategy reflects the adjustments potentially required in support and services for the next five years.

We recognise that engagement is key to continue our strategy developments locally. We will continue to build throughout the life of the strategy and hope to involve more people as we review our progress and as our action plan evolves.

Report No.  
CEF22039A

## London Borough of Bromley

### PART ONE - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

**Date:** 15 June 2022

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent                      Non-Executive                      Non-Key

**Title:** Contract Register

**Contact Officer:** Colin Lusted, Head of Complex & Long-Term Commissioning – Education, Care and Health Services. Email: [Colin.Lusted@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:Colin.Lusted@bromley.gov.uk)

**Chief Officer:** Richard Baldwin, Director of Children's Services

**Ward:** All Wards

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report presents an extract from May 2022's Contracts Register of contracts with a whole life value of £50k or higher, for detailed scrutiny by PDS Committee – all PDS committees will receive a similar report each contract reporting cycle, based on data as at 6 May 2022 and presented to ER&C PDS on 24 May 2022.
- 1.2 The Contracts Register contained in 'Part 2' of this agenda includes a commentary on each contract to inform Members of any issues or developments. A covering report will also be included where additional commentary is required.
- 

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee:

- Reviews and comments on the Contracts Register as at 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- Note that in Part 2 of this agenda the Contracts Register contains additional, potentially commercially sensitive, information in its commentary.

### Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The appended Contracts Register covers services which may be universal or targeted. Addressing the impact of service provision on vulnerable adults and children is a matter for the relevant procurement strategies, contracts award and monitoring reports, and service delivery rather than this report.
- 

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
- 

### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: - N/A
  2. Ongoing costs: - N/A
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Children, Education and Families Portfolio
  4. Total current budget for this head: - £49,077,000
  5. Source of funding: - Existing Relevant Budget 2022/23
- 

### Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): - N/A
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: - N/A
- 

### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
- 

### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Improves the Council's approach to contract management
- 

### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): N/A
- 

### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Contracts Register Background

- 3.1 The Contracts Database is fully utilised by all Contract Managers across the Council as part of their Contract Management responsibilities, which includes updating the information recorded on the database. The Register is generated from the Contracts Database which is administered by Corporate Procurement and populated by the relevant service managers (Contract Owners) and approved by their managers (Contract Approvers).
- 3.2 As a Commissioning Council, this information is vital to facilitate a full understanding of the Council's procurement activity and the Contracts Register is a key tool used by Contract Managers as part of their daily contract responsibilities. The Contract Registers are reviewed by the Procurement Board, Chief Officers and the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 3.3 The Contracts Register is produced four times a year for members– though the CDB itself is always 'live'.
- 3.4 Each PDS committee is expected to undertake detailed scrutiny of its contracts – including scrutinising suppliers – and hold the Portfolio Holder to account on service quality and procurement arrangements.

#### Contract Register Summary

- 3.5 The Council has 214 active contracts across all Portfolios as of 6 May 2022 for the May 2022 reporting cycle as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The summary for the Children, Education and Families Portfolio is as follows:

Item	Category	November 2021	February 2022	May 2022
Total Contracts	£50k+	37	37	34
Concern Flag	Concern Flag	0	2	1
Risk Index	Higher Risk	9	8	5
	Lower Risk	28	29	29
Procurement Status for Contracts approaching end date	Red	0	2	1
	Amber	4	7	3
	Green	13	8	9
	Neutral	20	20	21

### 4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS & CHILDREN

- 4.1 The Corporate Contracts Register covers all Council services: both those used universally by residents and those specifically directed towards vulnerable adults and children. Addressing the impact of service provision on the vulnerable is a matter for the relevant procurement strategies, contracts, and delivery of specific services rather than this summary register.

### 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council's renewed ambition is set out in [Making Bromley Even Better 2021 - 2031](#) and the Contracts Database (and Contract Registers) help in delivering the aims (especially in delivering

Ambition Five – Resources & Efficiencies). For Ambition Five, this activity specifically helps by supporting ‘robust and active contract management’.

**6. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Most of the Council’s (£50k plus) procurement spend is now captured by the Contracts Database. The database will help in ensuring that procurement activity is undertaken in a timely manner, that Contract Procedure Rules are followed and that Members are able to scrutinise procurement activity in a regular and systematic manner.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Contracts Database and Contract Registers are not primarily financial tools – the Council has other systems and reports for this purpose such as the Budget Monitoring reports. However, the CDB and Registers do contain financial information both in terms of contract dates and values and also budgets and spend for the current year.

**8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no direct personnel implications but the Contracts Database is useful in identifying those officers directly involved in managing the Council’s contracts.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct legal implications but the Contracts Database does identify those contracts which have a statutory basis and also those laws which should be complied with in delivering the contracted services.

9.2 A list of the Council’s active contracts may be found on [Bromley.gov.uk](http://Bromley.gov.uk) to aid transparency (this data is updated after each ER&C PDS meeting).

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	None
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 – Key Data (All Portfolios)</li> <li>• Appendix 2 - Contracts Database Background information</li> <li>• Appendix 3 – Contracts Database Extract PART 1</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 Key Data (All Portfolios)

Item	Category	November 2021	February 2022	May 2022
Contracts (>£50k TCV)	All Portfolios	207	206	214
Flagged as a concern	All Portfolios	0	8	1
Portfolio	Executive, Resources and Contracts	59	60	63
	Adult Care and Health	48	50	49
	Environment and Community Services	19	17	17
	Children, Education and Families	37	37	34
	Renewal and Recreation and Housing	39	37	44
	Public Protection and Enforcement	5	5	7
Risk Index	Higher Risk	69	69	71
	Lower Risk	138	137	143
Procurement Status for Contracts approaching end date	Red	0	8	1
	Amber	23	16	18
	Green	58	65	60
	Neutral	126	117	135

## Appendix 2 - Contracts Register Key and Background Information

### Contract Register Key

1.1 A key to understanding the Corporate Contracts Register is set out in the table below.

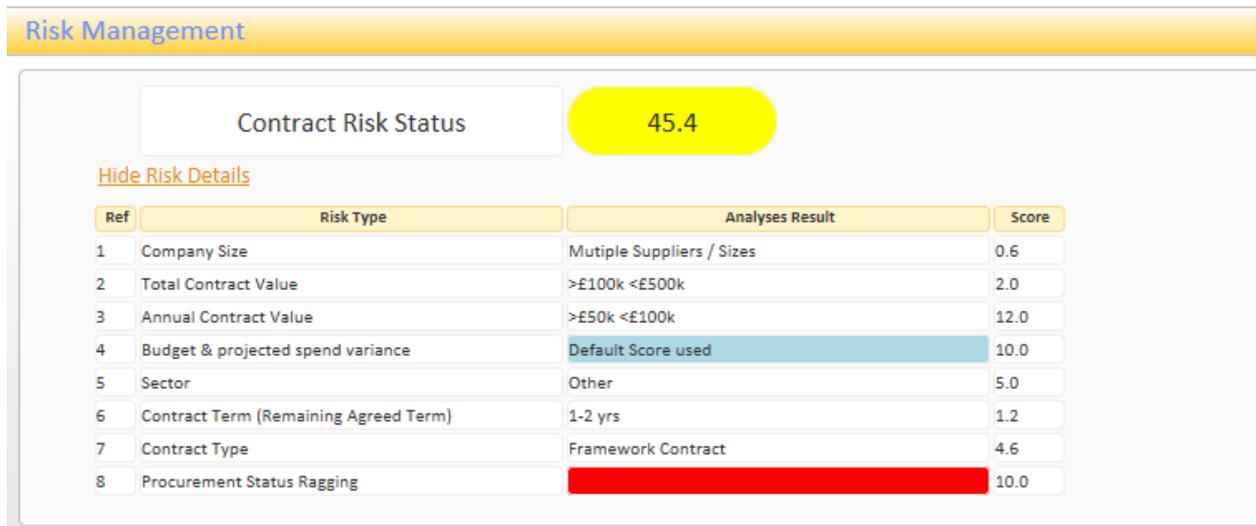
Register Category	Explanation
<b>Risk Index</b>	Colour-Ranking system reflecting eight automatically scored and weighted criteria providing a score (out of 100) reflecting the contract's intrinsic risk – reported as either Higher Risk or Lower Risk
<b>Contract ID</b>	Unique reference used in contract authorisations
<b>Owner</b>	Manager/commissioner with day-to-day budgetary / service provision responsibility
<b>Approver</b>	Contract Owner's manager, responsible for approving data quality
<b>Contract Title</b>	Commonly used or formal title of service / contract
<b>Supplier</b>	Main contractor or supplier responsible for service provision
<b>Portfolio</b>	Relevant Portfolio for receiving procurement strategy, contract award, contract monitoring and budget monitoring reports
<b>Total Contract Value</b>	The contract's value from commencement to expiry of formally approved period (excludes any extensions yet to be formally approved)
<b>Original Annual Value</b>	Value of the contract its first year (which may be difference from the annual value in subsequent years, due to start-up costs etc.)
<b>Procurement Status</b>	For all contracts automatically ranked by the Database as approaching their end date, a manual RAG rating is assigned by the Assistant Director Governance & Contracts to reflect the status of the contract. The RAG ratings are as follows:  <b>Red</b> – there are potential issues with the contract or the timescales are tight and it requires close monitoring.  <b>Amber</b> – appropriate procurement action is either in progress or should be commencing shortly.  <b>Green</b> – appropriate procurement action has been successfully taken or there is still sufficient time to commence and complete a procurement action.
<b>Start &amp; End Dates</b>	Approved contract start date and end date (excluding any extension which has yet to be authorised)
<b>Months duration</b>	Contract term in months
<b>Attention </b>	Red flag or Red RAG indicates that there are potential issues, or that the timescales are tight and it requires close monitoring. Further commentary may be provided in the Part 2 report.
<b>Commentary</b>	Contract Owners provide a comment –where contracts approach their end date. Corporate Procurement may add an additional comment for Members' consideration <i>The Commentary only appears in the 'Part 2' Contracts Register</i>
<b>Capital</b>	Most of the Council's contracts are revenue-funded. Capital-funded contracts are separately identified (and listed at the foot of the Contracts Register) because different reporting / accounting rules apply

### Contract Register Order

1.2 The Contracts Register is ordered by Procurement Status, Portfolio, and finally Contract Value. Capital contracts appear at the foot of the Register and 'contracts of concern' (to Corporate Procurement) are flagged at the top.

## Risk Index

- 1.3 The Risk Index is designed to focus attention on contracts presenting the most significant risks to the Council. Risk needs to be controlled to an acceptable level (our risk appetite) rather than entirely eliminated and so the issue is how best to assess and mitigate contract risk. Contract risk is assessed (in the CDB) according to eight separate factors and scored and weighted to produce a Risk Index figure (out of 100). The Risk Index is reported as either 'Higher Risk' or 'Lower Risk'.



## Procurement Status

- 1.4 The Database will highlight contracts approaching their end date through a combination of the Total Contract Value and number of months to expiry . For all contracts highlighted by the Database as potentially requiring action soon, a commentary is provided on the status of the contract and a manual RAG rating is assigned.

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# Contract Register Report - £50k Portfolio Filtered - Children, Education and Families

May 2022

Risk Index	Main Contract Data						Finance Data			Contract Terms			Attention	Capital
	Contract ID	Owner	Approver	Contract Title	Supplier Name	Portfolio	Total Value	Original Annual Value	Proc Status	Start Date	End Date	Months Duration		
Lower Risk	4911	Rosemary Meissner	Carol Arnfield	<a href="#">Digital Solution for the Early Years Funding Process</a>	Sentinel Partners Limited	Children, Education and Families	92,580	30,860	■	31/07/2019	30/07/2022	36	⊗	
Higher Risk	5018	Simon Harrington-Whitnall	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">Passenger Transport Services Framework Contracts</a>	Multiple Suppliers	Children, Education and Families	49,000,000	7,000,000	■	19/09/2020	31/08/2025	59		
Lower Risk	3722	Sally Kelly	Richard Baldwin	<a href="#">Bromley Children Looked After (CLA) school attendance and data collection</a>	Welfare Call (LAC) Ltd	Children, Education and Families	91,640	20,420	■	01/04/2018	31/08/2022	53		
Lower Risk	4943	David Dare	Richard Baldwin	<a href="#">Dynamic Purchasing System for Education and Children</a>	Adam HTT Ltd (formerly Matrix SCM Ltd)	Children, Education and Families	60,000	20,000	■	03/03/2020	02/03/2023	36		
Lower Risk	3701	Karen Fitzgibbon	Vicky West	<a href="#">The Provision of Holiday and Saturday Group Based Short Break Service For Disabled Children and Young People</a>	Riverside School	Children, Education and Families	968,753	192,213	■	01/04/2018	31/03/2023	60		
Higher Risk	4947	Joanne Cozens	Rachel Dunley	<a href="#">Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls Service - VAWG</a>	Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid	Children, Education and Families	599,058	179,000	■	01/04/2020	31/03/2023	36		
Higher Risk	4888	Shakeela Shourie	Charles Obazuaye	<a href="#">Step Up To Social Work Cohort 7</a>	Royal Holloway, University of London	Children, Education and Families	593,124	78,000	■	10/06/2019	27/04/2023	46		
Lower Risk	4854	Aneesa Kaprie	David Dare	<a href="#">Family Group Conferencing Service</a>	Daybreak Family Group Conferences	Children, Education and Families	554,000	90,000	■	01/04/2019	31/03/2024	60		
Lower Risk	4905	Rachel Dunley	Vicky West	<a href="#">Cleaning Services to Children and Family Centres and Nurseries</a>	Chequers	Children, Education and Families	250,179	83,394	■	01/08/2019	31/07/2022	36		
Lower Risk	3712	Linda King	Betty McDonald	<a href="#">Post 16 Learner Tracker</a>	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	Children, Education and Families	210,000	42,000	■	01/04/2018	31/03/2023	60		
Lower Risk	3810	Yasmin Ahmed	Carol Arnfield	<a href="#">Provision of Nursery meals</a>	Zebedee's Lunch Box Ltd	Children, Education and Families	111,200	29,500	■	01/09/2018	31/08/2022	48		
Lower Risk	5029	Rachel Dunley	Richard Baldwin	<a href="#">Capital Bids for Childrens and Family Centres</a>	Bailey Partnership	Children, Education and Families	97,576	97,576	■	01/11/2020	30/11/2022	24		
Lower Risk	1433	Rachel Dunley	Vicky West	<a href="#">Children's - Mosaic Customer Segmentation Tool</a>	Experian	Children, Education and Families	88,242	25,414	■	01/10/2016	30/09/2022	72		
Higher Risk	5035	Kelly Sylvester	Richard Baldwin	<a href="#">Bromley Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service</a>	Bromley Y	Children, Education and Families	4,520,000	904,000		01/04/2021	31/03/2026	60		
Higher Risk	4945	Vicky West	Richard Baldwin	<a href="#">Provision of Adoption Services</a>	CORAM VOICE	Children, Education and Families	2,316,000	386,000		01/06/2019	30/05/2025	72		
Lower Risk	4946	Philip White	David Dare	<a href="#">Participation in West London Alliance for Children's Care and Support Services</a>	West London Alliance	Children, Education and Families	484,500	117,000		01/11/2019	30/04/2024	54		
Lower Risk	4957	Scott Bagshaw	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">ICT - Capita ONE Integrated Management Information System</a>	Capita Business Services Ltd	Children, Education and Families	450,000	90,000		01/04/2020	31/03/2025	60		
Lower Risk	5171	Carol Whiting	Richard Baldwin	<a href="#">Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) Service</a>	The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust	Children, Education and Families	330,000	165,000		01/01/2022	31/12/2024	36		
Lower Risk	179	Simon Harrington-Whitnall	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">Education - Co-ordination of admissions between 32 London boroughs</a>	London Grid For Learning Trust	Children, Education and Families	268,863	14,000		01/04/2004	03/06/2026	266		
Lower Risk	5135	Karen Fitzgibbon	Wenifred Marshall	<a href="#">Individual Short Breaks Service</a>	Bromley Mencap	Children, Education and Families	224,998	75,000		01/10/2021	30/09/2024	36		
Lower Risk	5047	Cathy Lloyd williams	David Dare	<a href="#">Independent Visitors</a>	CORAM VOICE	Children, Education and Families	129,000	43,000		01/03/2021	29/02/2024	36		
Lower Risk	5091	Liz Lake	Debi Christie	<a href="#">Family Support Services for CYP with Social and Communication Needs</a>	Bromley Mencap	Children, Education and Families	115,500	38,500		01/10/2021	30/09/2024	36		
Lower Risk	4912	Rachel Dunley	Vicky West	<a href="#">ICT - Management Information system for Children and Family Centres</a>	Servelec Group plc	Children, Education and Families	101,358	12,798		01/04/2020	31/03/2027	84		
Lower Risk	3786	Elena Diaconescu	Carol Arnfield	<a href="#">Adult Education MIS</a>	West March Systems Ltd	Children, Education and Families	95,050	21,490		05/11/2018	04/11/2023	60		
Lower Risk	5037	Debi Christie	Debi Christie	<a href="#">Mediation and Dispute Resolution Services</a>	Global Mediation Ltd	Children, Education and Families	84,000	28,000		01/01/2021	31/12/2023	36		
Lower Risk	3823	Mary King	Antoinette Thorne	<a href="#">Hiring of external facilities for various venues</a>	Various Suppliers	Children, Education and Families	80,000	36,000		01/04/2018	31/03/2024	72		
Lower Risk	4987	Betty McDonald	Vicky West	<a href="#">Youth Offending Service Management information system</a>	CACI Ltd	Children, Education and Families	80,000	16,000		01/04/2020	31/03/2025	60		
Lower Risk	4993	Debi Christie	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">SEND Parent Participation</a>	Your Voice in Health and Social Care	Children, Education and Families	80,000	20,000		01/06/2020	31/05/2024	48		
Lower Risk	3793	Sally Jolliffe	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">:Habilitation Services For Children and Young People With Vision Impairment</a>	Guide Dogs For the Blind Association	Children, Education and Families	77,220	15,444		01/05/2018	30/04/2023	60		
Lower Risk	5190	Stephanie Withers	Debi Christie	<a href="#">** Now Live ** Phoenix Centre IT Support Service</a>	Structured Network Solutions UK Ltd	Children, Education and Families	65,650	13,130		01/02/2022	31/01/2027	60		
Lower Risk	1509	Linda King	Betty McDonald	<a href="#">ICT - Software Licence - Line of business</a>	EduFocus Ltd	Children, Education and Families	60,987	4,999		01/04/2012	31/03/2024	144		
Lower Risk	1535	Sally Jolliffe	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">Education - Caretaking - Griffins Offices, Lovibonds Avenue, Orpington</a>	Lodestar Cleaning Contracts Ltd	Children, Education and Families	54,249	6,943		01/02/2017	30/09/2024	92		
Lower Risk	6233	Robert Bollen	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">** Now Live ** Chislehurst School for Girls - Permanent Hygiene Suite and Ramp</a>	Woodside Contract Services	Children, Education and Families	118,541	118,541		13/06/2022	22/08/2023	14		Capital
Lower Risk	5209	Robert Bollen	Jared Nehra	<a href="#">** Now Live ** Replacement of Heating System at Southborough Primary School</a>	Pinnacle ESP Holdings Ltd	Children, Education and Families	69,750	23,250		01/03/2022	31/03/2025	37		Capital

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Report No.  
CEF22020

London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

**Date:** 15 June 2022

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group (CSCPAG)  
Annual Report

**Contact Officer:** Charmaine Malcolm, Principal Social Worker, Children's Services  
Tel: 0208 461 7414 E-mail: charmaine.malcolm@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:** Richard Baldwin, Director of Children's Services

**Ward:** All Wards

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1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report presents the annual update of the Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group (see Appendix 1).
- 

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee notes the annual report.

### Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Improving practice and maintaining consistent practice standards across the Directorate.
- 

### Transformation Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
  2. Making Bromley Even Better Priority:  
(1) For children and young People to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home.
- 

### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost
  2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
  3. Budget head/performance centre: N/A
  4. Total current budget for this head: £N/A
  5. Source of funding: N/A
- 

### Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
- 

### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable - No Decision Required.
- 

### Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
- 

### Property

1. Summary of Property Implications: N/A
- 

### Carbon Reduction and Social Value

1. Summary of Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications: N/A
- 

### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users or customers (current and projected): Practice impacts Bromley children and families.
- 

### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress the Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group has made across 2021/2022 in supporting Children's Social Care towards achieving Bromley Excellence. The report can be viewed at Appendix 1.

<b>Non-Applicable Headings:</b>	Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children; Transformation/Policy/Financial/Personnel/Legal/ Procurement/Property/Carbon Reduction and Social Value Implications; Customer Impact; Ward Councillor Views
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]

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## CSCPAG Annual Report 2021/2022

### Introduction

Welcome to the second annual report from the Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group (previously Social Work Practice Advisory Group).

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the directorate on the progress the group has made across 2021/2022 in supporting Children's Social Care towards achieving Bromley Excellence.

The group have had a busy year and are excited to share with you the development and completion of several work streams.

### Progress on 2020/2021 priorities:

The 2020/2021 annual CSCPAG identified 3 recommendations:

- Change of name: Attendees proposed that the group name is changed to the 'Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group'.

**Update:** The name of the group changed from the Social Work Practice Advisory Group (SWPAG) to the Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group (CSCPAG) following feedback from staff across the directorate. Staff expressed that SWPAG was not inclusive of the wide range of professional roles and expertise across the directorate. The group relaunched as the Children's Social Care Practice Advisory Group in November 2021 and the name encompasses all roles in Children's Social Care.

- Work on the following work streams:
  - Professional curiosity
  - Safety and contingency planning
  - Depth and quality of management oversight
  - Quality of analysis in supervision and assessments

### Update:

Professional curiosity: now features in the mandatory Children's Social Care induction for all new starters. Relevant service area leads are responsible for new starters accessing the training through the learning and development programme.

Safety and contingency planning: A new safety plan template was designed and trialled between March and June 2021 with a final version finalised in July 2021. The new safety plan has been built into a standalone form on Liquid Logic and will promote a consistent practice approach across Children's Social Care. The new safety plan was created, with a holistic systemic approach in mind, which encourages children and young people to contribute to developing their safety plan. The new safety plan embeds the Bromley Relationship Model of working "with" our children, young people, young adults and their families. A safety plan training programme will be led by the Reviewing Officers from the Quality Improvement service between January 2022 to January 2023. The ambition is for all children with a child protection plan to have a

safety plan that outlines the safety concerns, identify the help needed and from who with a review framework.

Depth and quality of management oversight and quality of analysis in supervision and assessments: The Practice Assurance Stocktakes have a laser lens on improving these areas. Due to the similarities in both areas, it has been decided to combine the training with the target audience as Group Managers, Team Managers, Consultant Social Workers and Senior Practitioners. Workforce development are actively commissioning a training provider with a view of a training programme launching in March 2022.

- Representation: Each service area to identify two representatives to attend the Social Work Practice Advisory Group. One as main attender and one act as a back-up in the event of workload, absences or departure. Each representative is to provide the group with an update on:
  - key developments in the service
  - examples of practice to celebrate
  - practice challenges for the group to discuss and explore how to improve

#### **Update:**

There is a representative from each service area now attending the CSCPAG, however the aspiration for 2 representatives from each service has not been achieved. This remains under continuous review by the Senior Management Team for Children's Social Care.

The group continuously encourages staff across the directorate to join and represent their service area to ensure there are service updates, reflection on practice challenges and a celebration of the important work completed across the directorate.

#### **The CSCPAG Research group:**

The CSCPAG research group continues to be a secure and stable feature within Children's Social Care. It is designed to be a forum to discuss new and relevant research papers to ensure practice is informed by research. The group meets monthly and is facilitated by practitioners with good attendance from practitioners and managers.

The facilitators seek ideas from staff on research discussion points and has resulted in discussions on many relevant topics including the impact of Covid-19 on social work, burnout and emotional resilience, unconscious bias, and gender differences in child sexual exploitation.

The feedback from staff continues to be positive with staff sharing they are keen to develop research groups within service areas. The Youth Offending Service developed their research group in January 2022 in addition to existing Group Supervision. Our ambition is for this to be emulated across the directorate.

The research group serves as a hub to help unify services and teams that might otherwise not have regular contact. Staff often express delight when they have been able to put names to faces and the group recognises its role in creating and sustaining professional relationships.

The CSCPAG research group is ambitious and will be encouraging more participation from staff to include presentations on research relevant to their service area and/or specialism, increase opportunities for Students to present their dissertation research and findings to support our practice and engagement with children, young people, young adults and their families.

One of the CSCPAG research group aims is to support staff to be more curious and use research to inform their thinking, hypothesis and evidence-based practice.

### **CSCPAG achievements:**

The CSCPAG continues to meet every six weeks with an agenda circulated in advance. The administration for the group is well supported by the Personal Assistant to the Assistant Directors, Children's Social Care who ensures the group functions effectively and meaningfully.

Reflecting on workstreams is an essential element of the group's agenda recognising the impact that can be made to supporting and improving practice ensuring Bromley's Children's Social Care are Getting to Excellence.

The CSCPAG are proud to share their achievements:

#### 1. Supporting mandatory inductions:

Welcoming new starters into Bromley Children's Social Care is important to convey key messages and promoting our commitment to the organisation's REAL values. An induction programme was developed in July 2021 that includes features of the Practice Improvement areas, professional curiosity and safety planning. These are essential to embed consistent practices across Children's Social Care. In addition, the induction programme includes Bromley Relationship Model training to ensure new starters are clear about our relational, compassionate and value-based practice when working with children, young people and their families. The induction programme was updated in January 2022 for new starters to understand how to effectively work with Early Intervention and Family Support Services. This will provide clear understanding of the early intervention offer within Bromley Children's Social Care and the referral processes to access this provision.

#### 2. Digital Direct Work Toolkit

Members of the CSCPAG have created a direct work toolkit, which will be digitalised and available on the CSCPAG SharePoint page. The direct work toolkit will provide managers and practitioners useful tools to support meaningful engagement and effective relationship building with children, young

people, young adults and their families. The aspiration is for the direct work toolkit to be launched in Spring 2022.

The direct work toolkit will provide useful resources to support several practice areas including and not limited to adult domestic abuse, child on parent abuse, safeguarding, life story work, direct work under Covid-19, working with non-verbal children and child exploitation.

### 3. New supervision policy

Supervision is recognised as essential in supporting reflective and evidenced based practice that enhances good outcomes for children and families. The CSCPAG has revised the Bromley supervision policy to reflect the Bromley Relationship Model, REAL values, critical reflection and equality. The policy has been designed to encourage 4 key areas for effective and meaningful supervision:

1. Managerial: reflecting on and reviewing competence, accountability, and performance.
2. Developmental: exploring continuing professional development and supporting life-long learning.
3. Supportive: providing personal support and reviewing physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. Supporting a relationship based and restorative approach to all relationships and practice.
4. Inclusion: reflecting on equalities, equity, diversity and inclusion ensuring the Supervisee is accessing support, services, and opportunities to achieve their best performance.

The policy will be launched in March 2022.

### 4. CSCPAG on SharePoint

The CSCPAG have used SharePoint to provide useful information for members and staff interested in the workstreams completed by the group, which includes and not limited to:

- CSCPAG research group facilitators profiles
- Recordings of the CSCPAG research group
- Direct work resources
- Bromley Relationship Model resources
- Practice guidance for safety plans
- Career progression information and guidance.
- Principal Child and Family Social Worker newsletters

## **Challenges**

Attendance:

The CSCPAG has experienced irregular attendance from some representatives with the primary reason being finding time to attend is difficult with demanding workloads.

It is important that the CSCPAG has regular attendance from all service areas to support diverse reflection, help identify practice improvements and celebrate good practice.

### **2022/2023 Priorities:**

1. The CSCPAG identified there is a need to develop an evidence bank of good practice to support new starters to understand Bromley's practice expectations and to support developing practitioners. The evidence bank will be located on the CSCPAG SharePoint page, and all records will be completely anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

The evidence bank will be developed by each representative from the CSCPAG obtaining examples of the following that are applicable to their service area. The quality of the evidence will need to be quality assured by the relevant Head of Service before shared with the CSCPAG and fully anonymised. The evidence bank will consist of and not limited to:

- Safety plans including contingency plans
  - Child and family assessments
  - Child in need plans
  - Child protection plans
  - Pre-proceedings letters
  - Children looked after plans
  - Pre-proceedings plans
  - Pre-proceedings working together agreement
  - Cultural genograms
  - Ecomap
  - Direct work examples
  - Asset plus assessment
  - Common Assessment Framework
  - Personal Education Plans
  - Strategy discussion/meeting record
  - Child protection enquiry (section 47)
2. Supporting services and teams to have reflective practice groups.
  3. Developing Action Learning Sets for Newly Qualified Social Workers on completion of the Assessed Year in Employment.
  4. Develop a guide to accompany the Children's Social Care consent form to provide to children and families explaining consent, how their information is used, information sharing arrangements and how to amend consent.

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