

SCRUTINY REPORT



MEETING: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 17th March 2022

SUBJECT: Update Report on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

REPORT FROM: Councillor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills.

CONTACT OFFICER: Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills
Jane Case, Commissioning Programme Manager for Children's Services Bury CCG

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Bury Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are committed to ensuring that all of our children are safe, have the best start in life, fulfil their potential, and are independent; this commitment extends to all, including our children with a disability and/or learning need.

1.2 This report provides an update following the detailed Annual Report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) submitted at the Children and Young Persons' Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 7th September 2021. <https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=328&MId=2958&Ver=4>

1.3 This report provides a mid-year summary of actions and progress across the SEND provision. A comprehensive SEND annual report will be provided again in the Autumn. A summary of the quarterly update on the Project Safety Valve programme which was submitted to the Department for Education on 1st March 2022 is detailed in Appendix I.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report provides a further update on Bury's progress in embedding the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

2.2 Local areas are subject to inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on their effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. These inspections focus on:

- evaluating how well local areas understand their strengths and areas for development
- how local areas demonstrate that provisions are improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- understanding how local areas are improving the experience of families in accessing services and support.

2.3 The inspection outcomes remain an ongoing key priority with actions which are encapsulated in the Local Area Strategic Action Plan. Senior managers have ownership of the actions and there is director oversight with challenge and the monitoring of progress against priorities.

2.4 However, although there are still challenges to address in Bury's provision for SEND, particularly around parental experience of pathways, progress has been made. Sections 3 to 8 of the report detail the progress the local area has made towards achieving our aspirations to embed the SEND Reforms and improve outcomes and experience for children and young people with SEND.

2.5 Specifically, we are working with parents, families, schools and other stakeholders to build relationships focused on outcomes for the child and deliver a more joined up approach.

2.6 Officers and partners meet monthly to review the actions in the Local Area Strategic Action Plan. There are 10 outcomes in the Action Plan:

1. Parents'/carers' and children's/young people's views impact on strategic decisions and shape and inform all work across the Local Area
2. Excellent local offer, understood and accessible to all, leading to improved life outcomes.
3. Integrated and transparent pathways allows parents/carers and young people to access services across education, health, and care.
4. High quality individualised Education Health and Care Plans and reviews drive improvements across the Local Area
5. Children and young people with SEND have needs met through local sufficient excellent education, health, and care services, jointly commissioned where appropriate
6. Earlier intervention and prevention to offer help and meet needs at the earliest opportunity, reducing the demand on high cost and sometimes ineffective interventions.
7. Improved standards across education and training ensures that there are high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND
8. Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) is embedded from early years including high quality transition to adult social care
9. A highly skilled workforce across all stakeholders improves outcomes for children and young people.
10. The local area has embedded robust accountability and governance structures

2.7 This report sets out a summary of actions from all the partner agencies against the plan. Agencies are committed to working together to ensure that the experience of children with SEND and their parents continue to improve.

3.0 Our aim is that Parents'/carers' and children's/young people's views impact on strategic decisions and shape and inform all work across the

Local Area and that we have an excellent local offer, understood and accessible to all, leading to improved life outcomes.

Co-production with parents and carers

3.1 Bury2gether (B2G), Bury's Parent Carer Forum, receives national grant funding to act as the strategic voice of parents/carers of children and young people with SEND in Bury. Bury2gether plays an important role in ensuring the voice and experiences of families are influencing service improvements. The Forum is represented on the Local Area SEND Board, and their members are involved in a wide range of co-production activities with health, education, and social care services.

3.2 Examples of co-production with B2G include the recruitment processes for new roles in the EHCP team. Board members have also joined recruitment panels for key posts on the Commissioning, SEN and Children with Disability Teams. Parent representation has been in place on the SEND Joint Commissioning Group for several years. Parents co-produced the themes to be included in the SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the SEND Parental Survey.

3.3 Inclusion Services have two fully co-produced projects underway this academic year with parents/carers as key partners: School Inclusion Quality Mark (with a co-production strand) and Graduated Approach (part of Project Safety Valve).

3.4 We are developing engagement networks with all parent groups, including in recent months the SEN Reform/protest Group. We are focused on building a culture of mutual respect and working together towards shared goals, so that we can develop a robust informal network. This work is being facilitated by the recently appointed parent/carers engagement officer. We are issuing monthly Local Offer newsletters which have been well received, and inviting local SEND groups to support the Parent/Carer SEND conference, which is being co-produced with B2G.

3.5 On 28th February 2022 Bury2gether hosted a multi-agency co-production event focused on the revised Local Area Strategic Action Plan.

3.6 Bury2gether are leading on draft proposals on a memorandum of understanding on co-production across the Local Area and on further Governance proposals.

3.7 Members of Bury2gether have formed a not-for-profit community interest group, Bee Inclusive, to enable them to lease a building for delivery of a SEND hub and enhance funding opportunities for the benefit of the SEND community. B2G retains its role as the parent/carers forum for Bury.

Local Offer

3.8 There are now regular sessions with services and parents/carers using the Bury2gether SEND hub as a venue. An event calendar has been developed with the parent forum for drop-ins, surgeries, and Q and A sessions offered both virtually and face to face. The first drop-in was a telephone consultation on the employment pathway for Preparing for Adulthood. This included a workshop provided by Bury SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDiass) on preparing for adulthood and how this supports children and young people with

SEND. Seventeen contacts were made, and the feedback was positive. We will apply the learning from this event to plan future drop-ins.

- 3.9 A monthly Local Offer newsletter has been introduced. The most recent newsletter has been attached as Appendix III.
- 3.10 Bury Together are advisers and advocates on the Local Offer working group. This group gives oversight of the forward plan to ensure that improvements are made to the Local Offer, including the potential for a Local Offer telephone line.
- 3.11 B2G have set up an SEND hub in the building they have leased. The hub will support the following: co-production opportunities, consultation opportunities, a hireable voluntary/community accessible space, a place to deliver social opportunities for children and young people with SEND, and a place to deliver support to parent/carers. The building is now open and operational. Details of the venue can be viewed here <https://www.beeinclusive.co.uk/contact-4>. The Bury Living Well Centre also provides a community facility.

Young Person's Voice in Bury

- 3.12 In the last report we explained that the Inclusion Ambassador/ SEND Advocate had set up a number of activities during Covid to mitigate loneliness for children and young people and has been proactive with a wide range of engagement tools/mechanisms to promote the voice of the child at a strategic level so central to children's services work.
- 3.13 The post is currently vacant and recruitment is underway. The post will sit within the Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) team, whose focus is on youth participation and engagement; this aligns with the priorities of the Inclusion Ambassador/SEND Advocate's work.
- 3.14 We continue to listen and respond to young people's views of services. Inclusion Services have posted staff profiles onto the Local Offer as young people have identified that they would welcome knowing those staff and their background in advance of any contact. This is to be rolled out across other teams as good practice.

Bury SEND Information, Advice and Support

- 3.15 The Bury SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (BURYSENDiass) is a contracted-out service which provides information, advice and support on: local policy and practice; the Local Offer; EHCPs, Personalisation; the Law as applied to an individual's situation; LA's processes for resolving disagreements, tribunals, complaints etc.
 - 3.16 SENDiass is a partner in the parent carer drop-in sessions.
- 4.0 Our aim is that Bury's local area is committed to ensuring young people with SEND have their needs met through improving Education, Health and Care services, jointly commissioned where appropriate**

The Graduated Response

- 4.1 Bury is making good progress to develop a Graduated Approach which sets out the provision schools would be expected to put in place for pupils at universal and SEN Support levels, and the provision schools, the Council and other agencies need to put in place for pupils with an EHCP. This tool helps schools understand when to request a statutory assessment and helps parents to have informed discussions with schools and settings about the support being provided for their child and expectations about a graduated response.
- 4.2 A lot of work has been carried out in the last six months to develop the Graduated Approach and is on track for launch in the autumn term of 2022. This has involved establishing a steering group and eight task and finish groups. These involve schools, SENCOs, colleges and parents with co-production activity at the core. The first two sections are being drafted now; the next will begin in March. Additional events with parents/ carers, children and young people will complement the work of the Task and Finish Groups.
- 4.3 There are bi-monthly Steering Group meetings to set the direction of the work stream. Work with web developers is underway to make the information accessible for the 0-25 age range, with versions for Early Years, School Age and Post-16. Also, the development of a special school specific supplement.
- 4.4 We are on track to align Early Help Locality Teams and Inclusion Partnerships. This will enable schools to access a wider range of support in a streamlined way across the whole set of SEND services, with the intended outcomes that fewer EHCPs will be required.
- 4.5 Examples of progress with the alignment of Early Help Locality Teams and Inclusion Partnerships include:
- Bury has completed an initial successful consultation with the Headteacher Reference Group to share proposals in November 2021. Further successful consultation with primary head teachers took place through the Inclusion Partnership meetings across the autumn term to launch proposals in principle.
 - Co-production activity with primary head teachers (February/March 2022) to design operational plans (3 of 4 meetings completed). Final proposals will be circulated to primary head teachers by the end of March 2022 for trial in the summer term 2022.
 - A review is planned for the end of the summer term and full operation is planned to take place from September 2022.

Early Years

- 4.6 The Early Years delivery model is an integrated pathway for all children from pre-birth to five years of age, supported by health care and early years professionals, leading to earlier identification of need for an increasing number of children.
- 4.7 Some of the activities in the last six months include:
- co-producing a sector-led project in partnership with early years settings, parents/carers, education, social care, and health colleagues.
- The aims of the project are to:
- upskill practitioners and SENCOs in maintained and non-maintained settings to better meet the needs of children with SEND

- develop inclusive practice within settings across Bury and build an additional layer of support for the early years sector through peer-to-peer support to better meet the needs of children with SEND.
 - improve support available for children with complex needs and their outcomes and develop parental confidence in mainstream early years settings.
- We have also developed an Early Years SEND transition document to ensure children and their families make a meaningful contribution to their planning and next steps, and SENCOs can better advocate for children with SEND
 - Bury have also been accepted to take part in the Special Approach to Making it REAL National Children's Bureau (NCB) project - Home Learning Environment support for families of children with SEND. Bury will benefit from training for 60 Early Years practitioners in the 'Special Approach to Making it REAL', plus the provision of an adapted workshop for 40 parents of children with SEND.
 - NCB have worked with Bury to deliver two Local Action Learning Sets which have brought together key LA, SEND and health stakeholders
 - We have a budget from NCB to order treasure bags and contents, to support families to engage in fun activities with their child to support their learning and development, which are linked to the four strands of Literacy.

4.8 Since the last report Bury has continued to deliver a project with the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT) through the work with GMCA aimed at raising the level of take up of free places for two-year-olds. In those areas in Bury which have the lowest take up, namely Sedgley, St Marys and Holyrood:

- Sedgley has now seen an increase from the summer term from 39.8% to 42.7% (Autumn term).
- St Marys has seen a **very** small decrease in take up from the summer term 50% to 48.4% (Autumn term).
- Holyrood has seen an increase in take up from the summer term 50% to 66.7% (Autumn term).

Our next priority will be to increase the take up in the Bury East area.

4.9 We are making good progress in delivering a GMCA project to raise the standards in speech language and communication. Bury now has 134 Communication Champions working across Early Years, including in schools, who can carry out Wellcomm assessments; Wellcomm is a tool used to identify children who may benefit from a speech and language assessment. Our EY Advisor Team/SLC Pathway Lead continues to deliver Wellcomm Training online, as well as in house to support those early years settings with high % of 2-year funded children.

4.10 Bury has also been partnered with a programme called Early Talk Boost- with I CAN. 46 early years providers, including schools, settings and childminders have been involved with this intensive programme, and continue to use the tools and resources to support children's Speech Language Communication development, and enhance the children's home learning environment. 66 practitioners have been trained across both early years providers and schools to deliver Early Talk Boost. Early assessment of impact shows that 80% of practitioners trained in Bury reported improvements for children in speech and communication.

Bury Schools Continuum of Provision

4.11 Bury's strategic ambition is for our children and young people with SEND to have their needs met in their local community. However, with only two special

schools and limited resourced provisions in mainstream schools this means that currently a number of children with EHCPs are placed in special schools out of borough.

- 4.12 There has been progress over the last six months to develop the continuum of provision for school pupils with SEND. This includes:
- As part of the PSV work-stream on the Dedicated Schools Grant, the funding methodology has been reviewed and proposals went out for consultation on the model of top-up bandings in October 2021
 - An additional Resource Provision, Vision House, has been developed in the borough which has been operational from summer 2021
 - Options appraisals have been undertaken on a number of resource provision proposals and we are working with a number of primary schools and one secondary school on SEMH (Social Emotional and Mental Health) Resourced Provision including an outreach offer.
 - Within Bury's sufficiency plan to meet the increased demand for school places and to reduce the reliance on out of borough schools, an 80 place ASD Special School is planned for 2023; and a 60 place SEMH Special School is to open in 2025; in addition, the opening of the new secondary free school in Radcliffe means that Spring Lane Pupil Referral Unit will be moving location.

4.13 Special Educational needs and Disabilities education sufficiency is a key workstream within Project Safety Valve and a more detailed update will be provided in the accompanying Project Safety Valve update report.

Outreach and School Support

- 4.13 The Local Authority Inclusion team offers support for mainstream primary and secondary schools and early years settings. This support is highly regarded and helps mainstream staff identify need, develop strategies and practices to better support their pupils with SEND.
- 4.14 The Local Authority Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has over the last six months offered a range of support functions:
- Developed and advertised the Recently Qualified Educational Psychologist Academy to attract EPs to working across the partnership of Salford, Tameside and Bury through offering an enhanced induction package and bespoke CPD to meet any covid impacted training experiences. Through this offer, a Senior EP and 4-5 main grade EPs have been recruited over a two-year period.
 - Support for SEND caseworkers through training, a team development day and drop-ins to support for example, managing and responding to difficult meetings or conversations and problem solving around challenging or complex cases.
 - Developed and launched Bury's Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Pathway. This has involved localised resources, and training for professionals and school staff and the establishment of a multiagency support pathway via Team Around Schools, bringing together Educational Welfare, Early Help and CAMHS. Training is also being targeted at secondary schools, to offer support to establish early in-school responses to need.
 - Childrens Rights to Play training developed and ready to be launched for primary, secondary and special school staff.

- 2nd cohort of the Headteacher peer supervision programme is running involving two workshops and the buddying of heads across the three services partnerships (Salford, Tameside and Bury)
- Continuing Professional Development: developed a virtual training programme for early years professionals, working with the SEND lead to contribute to further capacity building for the Inclusion First Award and to ensure any pre-statutory work is targeted most effectively.

Short Breaks

- 4.15 It is a priority to develop the Short Breaks/Local Offer for families in the borough so that there is a broader more comprehensive offer of universal targeted and specialist provision. The goal is to deescalate cases where a child/young person does not initially meet the social care threshold, but subsequently behaviours escalate so that at the edge of care. Work is underway to map Short Breaks in the borough including the third sector offer. The newly tendered Short Breaks services have been available since September 2021); referrals are being made into the provision by the Children with Disability (CwD) team. There is a commitment to review pathways into short breaks and to enable access to a greater and universal and targeted short break offer.
- 4.16 There are two new time limited (up to 12 weeks) programmes to enhance the learning of skills in children and young people, and also to increase participation in community activities so that both programmes increase independence and positive outcomes. The CwD team continue to discuss with families the most appropriate package of support for their child. In consultation and agreement with families, there have been positive examples of children moving from an existing package of support to a new service where there will be improved outcomes.
- 4.17 The new Positive Behaviour Support service is directed to meeting the needs of complex high-end cases where behaviours are such that the child/young person is on the cusp of residential care. There have been a couple of edge of care cases where this new service has been used successfully by the social worker in order to deescalate behaviours through a therapeutic model of support.
- 4.18 Currently as Bury has a limited universal offer. In support of developing a richer universal offer, Bury is part of a GM consortium bid to the DfE Respite Innovation Fund. Two groups are identified where there is an unmet need in Bury:
- Under 6's where access to more soft play facilities is needed
 - Teenagers aged 14 to 18 with autism and learning difficulties (not necessarily with a diagnosis of autism or vice versa) where access to more pastime/leisure facilities and venues is needed.

Children With Disabilities Team

- 4.19 As detailed in the last report, Bury Children's Services offer a specialist service to children and young people with disabilities and their families through the Children with Disabilities [CwD] team. Since the last report the CwD team is now fully staffed with a Team Manager, seven social workers and three family

support workers. The service currently meets the need of 265 children and young people and their families residing within the Local Authority.

4.20 In the last six months progress has been made in the following areas:

- Two transition social workers have been successfully recruited to work with those 16-18 years old to ensure that updated assessments and My Adult Care Assessments are completed to support transition to adult services
- Work on transitions pathways continues
- Improvements have been made to the parent carer referral process through the MASH
- A revised parent carer assessment process in consultation with parents is under review; the next phase will look at the local offer for parent/carers in Bury
- Review of personal budgets and the outcomes for the child

4.23 Following the ILACs Ofsted judgement improvements within the Children with Disabilities [CwD] team have been incorporated within the improvement plan and have focussed on training and development and workforce stability.

Joint Commissioning

4.21 As in the last report, the Joint Commissioning Group is well established with Bury2gether representation at all meetings. In the last six months the following activities in the work-plan have been completed or started:

- Re-tendered SENDIASS with new specification co-designed with parents
- A service review is underway of the family support services contract (for social care)
- Investment in the Neurodevelopmental Waiting List Initiative has resulted in additional capacity to reduce the historical backlog of under 5's waiting to access the pathway
- A pilot of pre-diagnosis support and the development of a single point of access for ASC and ADHD services is underway
- 12-month review of the Sensory Pilot completed
- External review of speech and language therapy commissioned

4.23 A significant piece of work that the Joint Commissioning Group oversees is the SEND Parental Survey. The Group has developed the content as a multi-disciplinary survey with input from Bury2gether steering group on gaps and key questions. The survey was launched 18 January 2021 for 6 weeks to collect feedback on SEND services and is to close 11th March 2021.

4.24 Work is underway on developing the parent/carers offer. The next phase is to map the parent carer offer in other local authority areas and review in order to co-design the parent/carers offer in Bury.

Health

4.25 Since the last SEND report, the Children's Health agenda has progressed.

Due to the impact of Covid, on staffing and acuity of need and the lack of face-to-face delivery during lockdown. The waiting times within Speech and Language and Occupational therapy have generally increased. At present the Speech and Language team have a wait time of 19 weeks for those with a

known speech communication issue (SCDDG) and a wait of 48 Weeks for Assessment with an occupational therapist and ongoing plan. There is also a growing wait time for Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder assessments. These is being addressed at a local, and GM level. Services with extensive wait times as highlighted above have monthly Directorate meetings which include Trajectories and action plans with the Senior leadership team to ensure operational and clinical oversight is maintained.

- 4.26 The Health Senior leadership team and Service leads are working closely together to ensure that those currently waiting are seen within the appropriate clinic as timely as possible, which include those children known with SEND. All Children are appropriately triaged in line with the national prioritisation.
- 4.27 Speech & Language Therapy (SALT) Is a service supporting 324 children and young people with EHCPs with a further 150 children and young people currently being assessed or likely to be referred for statutory assessment. All students in the local authority special school provisions have EHCPs have access to the SALT service, provided in the settings. The SALT service offers universal / targeted support and training to staff that benefits all students, and specialist intervention for individual students if needed. There is a community Dysphagia service delivered face to face in clinic or setting / home visits, or remotely.
- 4.28 As per the proposal within the previous report a system wide review of speech language and communication has been initialised. This is progressing well and will look to take a whole system approach to understanding need in Bury and progressing joint commissioning arrangements.
- 4.29 Children Community Nursing Team and Special School Nursing
There has been significant increase in support/activity from the complex nurse for children with complex needs, palliative and end of life care, which has sustained and met the challenge ensuring our most vulnerable children and families have had support and continuity during pandemic. This has in part been done virtually but again where patient requires face to face this is always undertaken.
- 4.30 Health Visiting (HV) - All babies and Children 0-5 have open access to the service inclusive of those children with SEND, the service provides, developmental assessment. As well as the mainstream HVs there is a dedicated SEND HV post, which carries a case load of 30 complex children. The Service works with a much larger number of families on a, 'step on' basis, Delivering short term outcome-based interventions. These families have an identified specific need/s that can be met by the SEND HV service over a period of time, this can be anything from 6 weeks up to 6 months depending on the individual needs of the family. This has seen the development of facilitating parent drop ins at the SEND Hub alongside SEND Engagement officer. This is Planned for 1st March, with a view to engage parents and families, and aid coproduction. Currently the post holder is developing a SEND early years group in conjunction with Portage to be delivered monthly at the SEND Bee Inclusive HUB.

- 4.31 The physical therapy team have a total of 119 children on their caseload with EHC's. Physiotherapy prioritise all children referred with development delay. Children will predominantly be seen face to face, as well being offered virtual assessment to support child and family need. In addition the Occupational Therapy team provide sessions at our two special schools. Additional OT capacity is being recruited to support the children's long covid pathway.
- 4.32 Key Challenges in Health. The health system recognises challenges within the system in relation to SEND and are working actively with system partners to ensure that SEND Children continue to receive priority care and support in relation to their health need. The recognised challenges are as follows
- Addressing waiting lists and understanding the longer-term impact of Covid on children's health
 - Increasing access to system wide data to better understand and plan services
 - Population led capacity building, as staffing as levels do not always reflect the growing number of children with complex physical difficulties attending special schools
 - National and regional shortage of specialist staff. Unfilled vacancies impacting on caseloads and resources, in particular speech and language, where this is a national shortage of therapists.

5.0 Bury's aim is that preparing for adulthood (PFA) is embedded in Bury from the earliest years

Transition

- 5.1 The SEND employment officer continues to work closely with local colleges and those students with high needs who are in the last year of a vocational course or on a workability/employability programme. This is a targeted service to match students to employment supported opportunities. In 2020/21 (contact was limited due Covid restrictions) 54 students were on the SEND employment officer's caseload with 16 moving into a positive outcome and 38 continuing in education.
- 5.2 Covid has limited the work with local businesses but slowly there is an increase in aspirations for young people as lockdown restrictions are lifted and more employment opportunities can be seen. Supported Internships have taken a dip though job fairs are now starting up again and the SEND employment officer is actively engaging with employers to source vacancies.

Destinations

- 5.3 The percentage of Bury pupils with SEND in education, employment or training (EET) and not in education, employment or training (NEET) was reported on in the last report. There is no new validated data with national comparators. Progress will be reported in the next Annual Scrutiny Report September 22. However in a snapshot from January 2022 92% of young people aged 16-18

identified as SEND support and 89% of young people with an EHCP were in Education, Employment or Training.

Post 16 opportunities

5.4 A new £10m European Social fund (ESF) project for Greater Manchester for 15–24-year-olds started in January 2022. The project has been allocated in two lots:

- Lot 1 15–18-year-olds to Career Connect for whom Bury Council are the sub-contractor for the borough. Connexions are doing the bulk of the starts assisted by Curriculum & Language Access Service.
- Lot 2 for 18–24-year-olds is being delivered by Ingeus with a base in Bury. Young people with SEND are a priority group for both lots.

6.0 Bury's aim is that transparent pathways allow parents/carers and young people to access services across Education, Health and Care

6.1 Progress on the pathways workstreams is ongoing and progress will be reported in the next Annual Scrutiny Report September 22.

7.0 Bury's aim is to have highly effective Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and reviews improve life outcomes for children and young people

7.1 Parents' experience of the EHCP process has been inconsistent. We are committed to improving both experience and outcomes. A more detailed analysis of the key indicators for the EHCP processes is in the Project Safety Valve Report attached as Appendix I.

7.2 However it is pleasing to note that the backlog of cases waiting over 20 weeks has been cleared for the first time with a significant increase in plans being finalised in the last 4 months. In January 2021 there were more than 250 EHCP plans in progress; in February 2022 there are currently fewer than 150 new plans are in progress with a much-improved trajectory on timeliness. Additional data is attached as Appendix II.

7.3 Improving the experience, quality and timeliness of plans remains a key priority. Although there has been an increase in positive feedback to the EHCP team there is clearly much still to do. In a challenging February Q+A session held by Bury2gether it was clear that many parents still found the experience challenging and adversarial. Although several individual cases have subsequently been followed up there remains a key piece of improvement work to do which is a priority workstream within Project Safety Valve. To enable this to take place there are planned a series of workshops to co-design the advice; review the plan itself; review the process map including panel and also to include parents within the QA of anonymised plans.

8.0 Bury is working towards improved outcomes and standards across education and training

8.1 Bury has high expectations and aspirations for children and young people with SEND. The educational outcomes for children and young people in Bury continue to show an inconsistent picture across age ranges and across different types of need. The last validated Data is from 2019 due to the disruption on assessments from COVID-19.

- 8.2 Improving outcomes for children at SEND Support and for those with an EHCP is a priority for Bury. Bury's inclusion team provides outreach support to mainstream schools and early years settings. Though no validated data for 2020 or 2021 will be available, the next report will include some local performance analysis of student attainment in 2020 for SEN Support and with EHCPs at the key stages of education.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Bury is committed to a programme of transformation and is determined to continue its work on co-production with parents to improve both outcomes and the experiences of children, young people with SEND and their families. This mid-year report provides evidence of the progress made towards that goal.
- 9.2 We are revising our Local Area Strategic Action Plan with governance through the Local Area SEND Board. There is a strong commitment from Bury2gether to the priorities, outcomes, and actions in the Local Area Strategic Action Plan. This was evidenced in a joint workshop held on 28 February 22 with Bury2gether. The Action Plan has now been adopted as meeting the needs of parents/carers and delivering improved outcomes for children and young people. The plan will be an iterative process.
- 9.3 The Project Safety Valve Transformation Delivery Plan complements the Local Area Strategic Action Plan with agreed priorities, joint working on integrated pathways and continued work on quality and timeliness of EHCPs; improving outcomes for children with SEND support and improving the experience of families. Progress is reported on in the PSV Progress Report.
- 9.4 The Terms of Reference and membership of the Local Area Board for SEND has been reviewed and going forward it will be responsible for driving the SEND strategy and providing assurance of the SEND system. The Local Area SEND Board will:
- Provide sufficient scrutiny and effective monitoring on the progress and impact of the Local Area SEND Strategic Action Plan; and
 - Identify, facilitate, and deliver additional support and resource as and when required to ensure delivery of the Local Area SEND Strategic Action Plan
- 9.5 The Local Area SEND Board receives reports on progress of the Project Safety Valve SEND Transformation Plan.
- 9.6 Committee members are asked to consider and comment on the information in this report, identified priorities and the next steps detailed in Appendix I.

List of Background Papers:

September 2021: Bury Council Annual Report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=328&MIId=2958&Ver=4>

School Forum Reports on Project Safety Valve.

Summary slide deck: [PowerPoint Presentation \(bury.gov.uk\)](#)

Report: [Item 6 - Project Safety Valve - Schools' Forum report - January 2022 \(bury.gov.uk\)](#)

Contact Details:

Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills
i.booler@bury.gov.uk

Executive Director sign off Date:

JET Meeting Date: