

# The Metropolitan Borough of Bury

## Emerging outcomes from the SEN Review

### Bury's Top 10 Priorities

#### October 2017

## Bury's Top 10

Following completion of the SEN review Focus Group meetings, ten key themes are emerging which will need to feed into Bury's new SEN strategy.

### 1. Engaging with children young people and their families

Bury needs to engage in a more positive way with service users to develop individual plans and strategic plans for the Borough. Effective engagement mechanisms need to be in place in order that commissioners ensure that service users participate in shaping the local offer so that it meets the needs of the population of Bury. It is important that service providers understand the needs and aspirations of the families they are supporting through effective engagement activity.

Bury will need to invest in the young people and parents' network, Bury2gether and the STAR group to develop a positive relationship and to progress an effective dialogue. An engagement event should be organised which is aimed at developing a participation strategy for Bury. Young people and parents should participate in order to establish some basic principles of engagement which should be adopted by all partners in Bury.

### 2. Developing joint-commissioning arrangements

Once a positive engagement approach is in place with service users, the systems which bring about change through commissioning and joint-commissioning need to bring about positive improvements to the local offer. A joint-commissioning strategy is required which sets out how the offer will be shaped to meet user requirements. This should include establishing a "bank" of data and information which informs the development of the local offer. In particular, this activity should focus on early years provision, SEMH provision, autism provision, the sufficiency of special school places and establishing a single pathway into Independent Non-Maintained settings.

### 3. Developing a Graduated Funding Model

Bury needs to develop a more graduated system of special needs funding which distributes funds in a fair and equitable way. Bury needs to increase understanding of the use of notional SEN funding. It needs to establish a system for distributing funding to children in mainstream schools without the need for an EHC plan. It needs to establish ways of making financial allocations to partnerships of schools and also carry out an evaluation of the effectiveness of the system currently used for allocating funding to special schools.

### 4. Establishing a consistent SEN Support Offer in Bury

Parents should fully understand what SEN support looks like and know what they should expect from their local school. The majority of families want local solutions in local mainstream schools that better understand the needs of their children, are better trained and better resourced to meet their needs. Common systems and processes should be available to SENCOs. Heads, SENCOs and Governors should be aware of their duties and responsibilities in relation to pupils with SEND, and use their best endeavours to put reasonable arrangements in place to meet their needs.

## **5. Developing SEN Inclusion Partnerships between Schools**

Schools are best placed to support each other. Bury needs a school led, school improvement approach to SEN. Partnerships of schools could provide support and challenge to bring about improvements across the Borough. Bury needs to build on existing good practice. Some schools are excellent in their approach and provision. It is possible to be both inclusive and outstanding in Bury. Where existing good practice is known, this should be shared and where appropriate replicated across the Borough.

## **6. Ensuring that there is sufficient Specialist Provision**

Bury has a range of excellent special schools and resourced provisions. They appear to be full and as a result significant numbers of children needing special school provision are being placed outside the borough in the independent non-maintained sector. This is not a cost effective solution. Bury should ensure that its children with the most complex needs have places in its local specialist schools. and provision.

## **7. Developing SEMH Arrangements**

There are too many permanent exclusions in Bury. This should not be seen as a good solution for highly vulnerable children. The PRU is experiencing significant pressure and primary and secondary schools are willing to establish a new set of arrangements led by locality neighbourhood partnerships. The partnerships should carry out audits of need across their locality, audits of practice, develop within school resilience and expertise, develop a new range of alternative provision and work in a new and innovative way with the staff at the pupil referral units.

## **8. Reducing Reliance on the Independent Non-Maintained Sector**

Bury should develop a plan to reduce its reliance on the use of providers in the independent non maintained sector.

Firstly, Bury should increase its knowledge about pupils attending Independent Non-maintained schools. This will involve identifying the age, needs, review dates and and leaving dates for all pupils currently attending such provision. All pupils placed in these schools should have their provision and placement reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the young people placed there and that they are safe, attending and making progress.

Future placements should only be made where all other possibilities have been exhausted. Over time, as pupils leave these placements, the value of previous fees should be reinvested into partnership arrangements.

## **9. Increasing awareness of the Third Sector offer**

The offer made by charities, support groups and small businesses in Bury is not used to best effect and is under-represented on the local offer. Steps should be taken to engage with the Third sector providers in order to maximise the potential they could offer to families in Bury.

## **10. Preparation for adulthood**

Bury should take the opportunity to initiate a conversation about preparation for adulthood. There is a noticeable lack of proposals about pathways into adulthood and this remains a significant area for further discussion and development.