Together is Better Agreement Bristol

SAY SEND AND YOU SENDIAS

Bristol Parent Carer Forum
Shaping the Future Together

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Together is Better Agreement

The context for our agreement

This is an agreement setting out how we as the following organisations and individuals can work together: -
SEND And You (SAY), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), and
Bristol Parent Carers (BPC), the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) for Bristol.

The purpose of our joint agreement is to ensure that families of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities who use our services benefit from the best, possible support, advice, from our collaborative working.

By working together efficiently and effectively, we aim to provide families with the information and support they need to achieve the best outcomes for their families.

The overarching principles we share are: -

1. A shared commitment to raising the quality of life, improving outcomes and opportunities for all disabled children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or additional needs and their families.
2. Fostering co-operative partnership working through positive, professional communication and collaboration (See Bristol City Council SEND and Inclusion Strategy and SEND Co-production charter).

The five principles we agree to are: -

- Ensuring clarity for families and stakeholders about our respective roles and responsibilities
- Commitment to working together to support, train and empower children, young people and parents in developing confidence and skills to advocate for themselves.
- Recognising and building on each other's strengths and expertise.
- Maintaining a culture of open, honest, and constructive communication.
- Publicly promoting and celebrating each other's efforts and achievements.

PART ONE

Our Common Goals and Values are: -

1. **Family and Young People's Concerns:** We agree to ensure that the concerns and needs of families, children, and young people are prioritized, with a focus on improving their outcomes.
2. **Timeliness and Effectiveness of Activities:** We agree that events and co-production activities planned together are well-timed and beneficial for parent carers and young people.
3. **Inclusion and Respect:** We agree to ensure that all parent carers, children, and young people are appropriately involved, respected, and meaningfully engaged in our shared activities.
4. **Organisational Concerns:** We agree to collaborate to identify and address shared concerns related to service delivery, policies, and practices.

Our common code of conduct

Individuals and our organisations agree to:

- Behave with respect and professionalism towards each other as per the expectations and standards set in the Nolan Principles of public life.
- Communicate openly, constructively, and respectfully, ensuring discussions remain diplomatic and objective.
- Be mindful of each organisations policies and procedures such as SAY's confidentiality and impartiality function, as well as BPC's Co-production Charter, and local area Memorandum of Understanding.
- Agree to be honest when there are challenges or differences to enable us to find a useful way forward that best enables parent carer voices to be heard and supported.

Building positive working relationships

We acknowledge the importance of partnership working and the maintaining of professional relationships and as such agree to resolve and mitigate any mistakes, tensions, and disagreements as soon as they arise.

We agree the following:

- We will meet as a minimum, 3 times per calendar year (termly and face to face where possible) so that we can best understand each other's works and capacity issues, priorities, and plans - to coordinate our efforts, plan ahead and work jointly when needed. This can be meetings or phone conversations.
- SEND And You (SAY) agree to act as Secretariat for the "Together is better" meetings and will arrange these and take minutes.
- Where there is additional work or cost involved with the tri-annual meetings, this will be agreed beforehand and shared on an equal basis.

Building positive working relationships (cont.)

- We acknowledge that SEND is a complex arena and there are a range of views, passions and capacities.
- We agree to talk and find a solution at the earliest opportunity and put any learning into place so that if the issues arise again, we know how to solve problems together.
- Do our best to share and promote information on each other's events and services.
- Advise each other of potential duplication or conflicting work or events as soon as possible.
- We will commit to working together on the annual SEND event, and other events that may take place.
- Contact one another to discuss any potential areas of disagreement if they arise to consider our concerns and discuss a way forwards.
- Be mindful and respectful of both volunteer and staff time, ensuring that each organisation's capacity is considered when making requests or setting expectations.
- We will only use each other's branded logos if we are holding a joint event unless we request a prior agreement for an individual event. We agree to signpost to each other's services via the use of logos on each other's website.
- We agree to all register if we intend to attend each other's events even if we are exhibiting. We agree not to charge each other attendance at events but to meet liability insurance requirements, we must register attendance. Where possible we will have representatives available reflective of the size of the event.
- Commit and encourage other organisations (in addition to families) to keep BPC updated on experiences of parent carers they are working with, to feed back into the collective voice of parent carers that BPC represents locally at a strategic level.
- Promote our own and each other's events, sessions and groups on our respective platforms, SAY's events and bookings and social media (see part two below).
- Commit to being accessible in our service delivery as a joint commitment and will endeavour to working together in our access arrangements for parent carers, children, and young people.
- Information about sessions will only be shared with third parties in the event of a safeguarding concern. Any concerns regarding an organisation will be discussed collaboratively with Hayley Hemming, Bristol Parent Carers, and Flo Weston or Santie Human at SEND And You, where appropriate next steps will be discussed and agreed.

PART TWO

Our Organisation-specific Goals, Values and Responsibilities

Bristol Parent Carers (BPC)

Bristol Parent Carers (BPC) is a charity representing parents and carers of children and young people up to 25 years with additional needs and disabilities. They aim to support parent/carers across Bristol in a number of ways. These include:

- Hosting free peer support and practitioner led information events (including information, training and engagement), where parents can meet, talk and receive support and information in relaxed surroundings.
- In the process of performing the above actions, BPC commit to supporting parents and gathering their opinions.
- These views and opinions will then be shared (with permission and confidentially via data measuring tools) with decision makers in the local authority, BNSSG ICB and Sirona Care and Health.
- Parent Carer views and information will be incorporated into the local area Co-Production charter and BPC ongoing coproduction efforts.
- Provide an informative website and social media presence.
- Publish news and information in all formats so that parent carers stay informed.

BPC will be Responsible for:

- Representing the collective voice of Parents and Carers within Bristol.
- Recruiting and training Parent Voice Facilitators to ensure equitable representation of the wider community and needs of local families.
- Reaching out to as many parents as possible by linking with other SEND parent groups, organisations and settings and encouraging families to join the BPC database.
- Listening, Collecting and Collating the views and experiences of Parent Carers, both directly and from other organisations working with them via Friends of the Forum (FoF), so that Parent Voice Facilitators can better represent families at strategic meetings.
- Co-producing at a strategic level across Education, Health and Social care informing and influencing local and national policy.
- Running networking, Information and Participation events to help inform our families and members.
- Providing support to our members through various means depending on what our members ask of us (i.e. Support Groups, Information Events, Counselling, Wellbeing, workshops, practitioner led sessions, Peer Support).
- Signposting families requiring support for SEND related questions and processes only to organisations that have trained advisors.
- We will actively signpost and advertise families requiring this support to the local SENDIAS service.
- We will maintain open and honest communication with all parties in line with our MoU and Co-production Charter.
- The responsibility to coordinate Consultations falls within the BPC remit but we acknowledge that ALL parties will need to support the BPC to carry out that responsibility.
- Publicising the work of SAY including key projects and events via our communication channels, in line with our policies and practice.

SEND And You SENDIAS Service

SEND and You (SAY) provides the statutory Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) in North Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

SAY SENDIASS is free, impartial, confidential, and independent. Our role as a SENDIASS is to help children and young people aged 0-25, and parent carers build their knowledge, understanding and confidence in SEND procedures, policies, practices, and law. In doing so, we want to enable people to communicate their own needs, wishes, aims and rights during their own journey.

We aim to empower children and young people and parent carers to play an active, informed role in making decisions about their education, health and social care. Professionals can use the SENDIASS to build their own knowledge and understanding. They can enable the people they work with to access SAY.

We cover: -

- SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support in early years, school, or college
- Improving communication with educational settings, local authority, health, and social care
- Transition between educational settings, phased transfer or moving between Children's and Adult's services
- Transport to educational placement
- Annual Reviews of Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) EHCP Application and Needs Assessment
- Appeals to Tribunal for refusal to assess for an EHCP, refusal to issue an EHCP, contents of an EHCP, ceasing to maintain an EHCP, and placement
- Exclusions and part-time timetables
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Disability Discrimination
- Making a complaint Health and social care queries related to the child or young person's disability. (See 'What to expect from SEND and You' guide).

SEND and You (SAY) SENDIAS Service will be Responsible for:

- Providing trained staff to deliver free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support (IAS) to children, young people and their parents with any type of special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25 years, in line with the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Offering an all-year-round service with a dedicated information advice and support line, including a 24-hour answerphone service within the current expectations of our contractual agreement
- Supporting a young person to access the service when they request as a separate service to their parent/carer
- Feeding back to BPC on key issues and themes arising from service users and providing further information and data at the trustees' discretion.
- Publicising the work of BPC, including key projects and events via our social media platforms, in line with our existing policies and practice.
- Signposting people who use SAY to BPC based on individual enquiries.
- Maintaining open and honest communication with all parties.
- Sharing knowledge of Local and National SEND developments and the work of the service.
- Help represent the legal backdrop behind health and social issues and support BPC in raising concerns with the LA and offering challenge where this is appropriate.
- Work collaboratively with BPC in emphasising and maintaining good practice and policies to the LA to ensure positive impact can continue.

Accessibility

SAY and BPC agree to do our best to ensure that people know how to find and access our services, ensuring we plan and make adjustments to support individuals.

Together is Better Agreement Bristol

Agreed on 24th of March 2025 by:

Sian Morgan
BPC Head of Community Support and Engagement
Signature: Sian Morgan
On Behalf of **Bristol Parent Carers (BPC)**

and

Santie Human
SAY External Strategic Lead
Signature: Santie Human
On Behalf of **SEND And You SENDIAS Service (SAY SENDIASS)**

To be reviewed on:

Date: **July 2025**

SAY SEND AND YOU SENDIAS

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