



May 2026

Dear Colleagues

I hope half term will bring not only sunshine but a welcome break for most of you, especially those who are in the middle of exams, their teachers and families.

Thankyou again for all your efforts and energy in our work to support children and young people across this city. Since my last update in early February, there have been significant changes in national policy and important local new news which are summarised below:

**Schools White Paper and SEND Reforms:** In late February, government published their long-awaited Schools White Paper. It brings a clear focus on the education system working together to break the link between educational outcomes and poverty which mirrors our work across Bristol through Bristol Future, as well as much needed investment and systems for improving universal and targeted SEND support.

All local authorities have been asked to work with partners to develop a local SEND Reform Plan by June. Thankyou to those of you who have been sharing your views during this process. We will share progress as we go along and look forward to our work together.

**Prevention and Early Help:** We are determined to improve access to early help for children and families as well as partners across the city. This ranges from strengthening our Family Hubs offer, to services around schools, to locally delivering the national Families First reforms. We're pleased to have set out some clear and shared plans through our Best Start in Life Plan recognising the very strong early years sector we have in this city and the Early Help Strategy respectively.

Our work to support children to remain safe close to home continues through the brilliant work of the Family Help teams in social care and in our through care and corporate parenting teams, working with the police and health partners as well as the voluntary sector and schools. We are opening 8 new children's homes in total and are pleased that all our current homes are now rated Good!

**Youth and skills:** It was a delight to celebrate the opening of the Young Futures Hub in Central and East Bristol – one of only eight national trailblazers – and the soft launch of the 224 Youth Zone in South Bristol (where our most recent Children and Young People's Policy City Hall,  
College Green  
Bristol BS1 5TR

**Hannah Woodhouse**  
Director of Children and Education

**Website**  
[www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

Committee was held). We're actively exploring opportunities to replicate this model in North Bristol working with youth providers, schools and the local community and businesses.

Elsewhere the work of Safer Connections continues to develop supporting young people at risk of exploitation alongside community partners and schools. Risks of harm outside the home continue in the city, particularly exploitation of all types including sexual exploitation and knife crime but working together we know we can make progress to protect young people. Thankyou to everyone who is working so hard on these challenging issues.

We continue to collaborate closely with the West of England Combined Authority as they close in on publishing their regional Skills Strategy, which is building on the great work we are doing locally with programmes such as the South Bristol Youth Guarantee.

Across all this work, the importance of partnership cannot be overstated. The progress we are making – and our ability to respond to challenges – relies on the continued commitment, collaboration and shared ownership across organisations and sectors.

Lastly, we expect inspectors imminently under the ILACS framework for social care and look forward to sharing the work that our brilliant practitioners do every day across this city. Thankyou in advance for any requests to join focus groups!

Thank you for your ongoing support and contribution. We will continue to keep you updated as this work develops.

Yours sincerely,



**Hannah Woodhouse**

**Director Children and Education (DCS)**

Bristol City Council

**Key links:**

- [Bristol Belonging and Thriving Strategy](#)
- [Bristol Future Strategy](#)
- [Bristol Best Start in Life Plan](#)
- [Bristol Prevention and Early Help Strategy](#)