

## Minutes of the High Needs Block Recovery Working Group – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Present;** Neil Baker (Christ Church) James Passmore (Pickwick), John Hamp (Springfield), Sarah Garbutt (Studley Green), Siobhan Cheadle (Larkrise), Helean Hughes, Alison Enever, Cate Mullen, Lisa Fryer, Angela Everett, Marie Taylor, Grant Davis

**Apologies;** Lisa Percy (Hardenhuish)

### Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes and Actions from last meeting
3. DSG Management Plan – MT
4. HNB Recovery Plan - CM
5. HN SEN Data – Wiltshire Schools – GD
6. ISS Work Update – LF
7. Balancing the HN Budget – MT
8. AOB

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

'Round the Room' introductions

### 2. Actions from Previous Meeting

#### High Needs Recovery Plan

**Action:** GD/MT - Letter sent to Gemma Donnelly at the DfE regarding our DSG Deficit and Recovery Plan proposals seeking approval. A response will be presented to this group and the Schools & SEN Funding Working Groups and Schools Forum.

Subsequent meeting with Gemma and attendance at Schools Forum. Our 10-year recovery Plan has been shared and the LA is now required to complete the DSG Management Plan Template – discussed later.

**Action:** HH – requested details of any LA's who had overcome or 'turned around' a DSG High Needs Block deficit to see if any lessons could be learned.

Gemma Donnelly at the DfE confirmed that Northumberland, Thurrock & Wolverhampton – all managed a DSG High Needs deficit.

**Action:** GD/MT - A Disapplication Request to be prepared and may follow to transfer funding (greater than 0.5%) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block and also to propose a repayment plan which does not accord with the DfE's standard view of recovery plans.

Following discussions with Gemma and Schools Forum, a Disapplication is no longer proposed. For the 2020-21 financial year, only 2 requests in the whole country were approved to transfer a sum greater than 0.5% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. The Secretary of State is insistent that 99.5% of the Schools Block funding must be passported to schools, this has been re-iterated by the DfE and therefore submitting a Disapplication is considered a fruitless exercise.

Schools Forum are of the mindset to be able to transfer up to 0.5%, subject to being affordable which early modelling would indicate will be fully affordable.

### July Spend

**Action:** MT to create an exceptions report for next time

This has been superseded by the DSG Management Plan which now needs to be completed and submitted to the DfE. The DSG Management Plan is a huge document. Whilst Marie will co-ordinate the completion of the Plan, the return will draw upon much information from the operational teams.

## **HNB Recovery Plan and Various Actions**

**Action:** ML - to review SLA's consistency

In progress

**Action:** ML - to review RAG ratings

RAG Ratings have been adjusted due to the impact of Covid which has had a detrimental impact upon most of the targets

**Action:** ML – invite Lisa Fryer to attend and update at next meeting

Actioned and Lisa attending to provide an update on her work

**Action:** A. Everett – look at whole plan, timescales, partly due to Covid and re-prioritising if needed.

In progress

**Action:** ML to ask colleagues to review the plan in the light of Covid delays, leadership changes and additional areas of focus

In progress

**Action:** Group – to consider questions below.

- Do Governors understand role of Notional SEN?
- How do we highlight the role of Notional SEN (with Heads, SENCO's, SBM's)?
- How do we call schools to account for Notional SEN?
- Could we incorporate Notional SEN into EHCP process? If so, how?

Notional SEN continues to be an issue. Need to ensure that Internal Staff all have a full understanding of Notional SEN before they are able to question schools use of their Notional SEN funding.

In December, we will be able to revise the proportions which comprise the Notional SEN, as part of the school budgeting process.

**Action:** GD – to run a session at Governor conference in November on High Needs funding and to incorporate Notional SEN.

2 Sessions being run at the Governor Conference, both focussing on SEN and incorporating Notional SEN within the sessions.

CM ran SEN sessions at the Governor Conference and also incorporated the role of Notional SEN from an operational perspective.

**Action:** HH – to put JH in touch with Robert Holman in Commissioning as Robert is looking at whole of life package and will be able to work with and support John.

HH has put Jon Hamp and Robert Holman in touch, whole of life pathway work.

## **3. DSG Management Plan – MT**

- The DSG management Plan is a comprehensive document which draws upon various strategic LA documents around SEN, much wider than simply a finance focus. Completion of the management Plan will draw upon the expertise of key LA officers to pull together the finalised document.

**Action MT:** – has circulated the Plan document and has asked Charlotte for the document to be placed on SharePoint so that all can access the document and maintain a centrally completed version.

- MT confirmed that the DfE recognise the funding shortfall across High Needs and that under-funding remains a cause of the issues faced by LAs up and down the country. The DfE still anticipate completion of the Plan and presentation of the first version of the plan to Schools Forum in time for its budget planning discussions for 2021-22. The final budget discussions take place at the Schools Forum meetings in December and January.

- MT spoken to DfE – given the complexities of completing the plan and, in light of conflicting priorities, there may be extended deadline for completion, but nothing has been confirmed.

#### 4. HNB Recovery Plan - CM

Cate shared Summary recovery plan and worked through the areas in turn.

<b>Dyslexia friendly schools</b>	Ian Abbott	On track	Planning work was able to continue during Covid with planned activity starting from September 2020. The main activity of working with the selected schools has not yet started.
<b>Inclusion and school effectiveness project</b>	Louise Lewis & Cate Mullen	Not Started	Covid has meant engagement for much of the work has been paused. A review of these projects needs to happen ASAP - to track which have begun and which to reengage. Some can also link to TAS. Joint SEND/SE POGs planned to bring together the work of these two areas of E&S. Work relating to development of a Wiltshire OAP is also ongoing.
<b>ELP &amp; Resource Bases</b>	Cate Mullen & Alison Enever	Delayed	Place Planning Group initiated that will review Resource Base and ELP provision across Wiltshire. Rapid piece of work to identify range of provision and areas of unmet need. Will lead to strategic place planning for next 3-5 years. From this can identify work needed to review and update SLAs and outcomes measures and dashboards for RB and ELP provision.
<b>SEND Assessment &amp; EHCP</b>	Cate Mullen & Tim Morgan	Not Started	Acknowledgement that this is a priority area and the scope of the tasks associated with it. Work undertaken in relation to the utilisation of FACT funding to support appeal process and commenced new process for reviewing and support relating to appeals.
<b>Independent Special School Review</b>	Lisa Fryer	On Track	Clear gap in terms of in-county SEMH provision identified. Downland HNU (Secondary) proposal requires MDT development and further S/Officer consideration. No Primary SEMH provision or plan forward is in place, this results in costly ongoing ISS solutions having to be found. Gap in ASD (higher end needs) provision identified resulting in 'no's from S/Fields. Revised approach to supporting D/land and S/Fields to take more challenging is required.
<b>Post 16 Transition</b>	Cate Mullen &	to be	Need to ensure this is aligned with the PFA strategy and SEND Inclusion Implementation Plan. Area relating to dissemination of PFA strategy progressing. Recent discussion with Robert Holman about re-working this area to

**Dyslexia Friendly Schools** – Ian Abbott has been working on this area and has been providing support for schools. A virtual offer has been offered to schools to support them and this area is on track.

**Inclusion and School Effectiveness Project** – Covid has led to the pausing of some of the work, therefore LL & CM re-prioritising areas. Much of the work is going on behind the scenes between School Effectiveness and SEN.

**ELP & Resource Base's** – AE and CM – started in September with EO's looking at provision landscape (Place Planning Group) – places, strengths etc and is on-going but the work is well underway, particularly for Special Schools and ELPs. Further work on SLA's and quality of offer and provision offered is required. SEND Capital funding has been allocated and the additional places have been created in the main. The website has details of all of the places and spend. AE updated group to show places which have been delivered and are up and running.

- Avenue
- Wansdyke
- Castle & River Mead

SG asked a query – Matt Sambrook had started work on SLA's for RB's and ELP's and it was asked if there was an update? If not, SG offered to help if further work is required.

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<b>Post 16 Transition</b>	Cate Mullen & Robert Holman	to be amended	Need to ensure this is aligned with the PFA strategy and SEND Inclusion Implementation Plan. Area relating to dissemination of PFA strategy progressing. Recent discussion with Robert Holman about re-working this area to encompass activity relating to pre-16 learners. Update for next meeting
<b>SEND Alternative Provision Project</b>	Vicky Dunncliffe	Delayed	Plan has been revised due to Covid 19 and has experienced some delay. Work undertaken with schools colleagues at both primary and secondary phase has progressed well and been positive. Final agreement for secondary SLA pending. New provider list has been published and shared with schools which is an important step in the original aim of HELM dates in place, multi agency sign up x 4 areas across county, cases are coming through to be discussed at HELM, DSC/Portage referring through HELM, key data will be collected and collated to feedback into education outcomes meeting. Wave 1 HELM completed, WAVE 2 November, AE captured themes from HELM to share with teams and managers/ colleagues in health, need health input, SALT committed to attend November meetings, AE has meeting this month with Alison Burge, to discuss wider health input.
<b>Early Intervention Project</b>	Angela Everett	On track	

**SEND Assessment & EHCPs** – huge area of work within SEN and needs ongoing attention to deliver the best outcomes. Funding been made available to help with this work through the FACT programme. Delays are being experienced in the main due to Covid.

**ISS review** – Lisa Fryer to update the group later in the meeting

**Post-16 Transition** – Robert Holman to be invited to update the meeting. CM noted that there is ongoing work around PFA and the work in this area. Further work around transition to be reflective of direction of the LA and to incorporate pre-16 too.

**SEND AP Project** - work progressing with Vicki Dunncliffe but has been delayed due to Covid.

**Early Intervention Project** - Wave 1 completed helping with transition and strategies. AE is progressing well with the project and meeting health colleagues this month.

### 5 HN SEN Data – Wiltshire Schools – GD

GD presented SEN data taken from the January 2020 SEN School Level Data census information. The information showed the following:

- SEN Support Pupils per school
- EHCP Pupils per school
- Combined SEN Support & EHCP proportions
- Breakdown by Primary, Secondary, Special and Independent in Wiltshire

The data was presented to show the:

- Top 10 schools with the highest proportion of pupils with SEN Support
- Top 10 schools with the highest proportion of pupils with EHCPs
- Bottom 23 schools with the highest proportion of pupils with SEN Support
- Bottom 23 schools with the highest proportion of pupils with EHCPs

The presented information showed a picture of all schools around the County and their proportions of pupils with recorded SEN.

The core data was taken from the following sources and the spreadsheet attached for reference:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2020>  
<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>

SG asked about the moderation of the SEN Support data.

NB confirmed that the numbers of EHCP's in a school does not make a school more or less inclusive but does form part of a wider distribution question of EHCP's. Also, is there a pattern around clusters of schools with some being more open, than others?

**Action ALL:** What does this data tell us and how can we use this data going forwards?

- Setting 'targets' ?
- Good practice from high SEN schools ?

## **6 Balancing the High Needs Budget - MT**

The DfE are looking for us to complete the Management Plan which covers the breadth of our work on High Needs.

JP asked if we were looking to balance the position on the DSG and whether we will be able to recover the deficit.

MT responded that the strategy would be to recover the deficit and a longer-term recovery would be required. The Management Plan will be used to drive forward the work towards the recovery in the High Needs Block, alongside all of the LA's existing work.

HH – Northumberland similar to us but would be good to know how others approach the model. The DfE's model does not support RB's but they are very successful in Wiltshire. DfE's view is Special Schools is the way forward, whereas in Wiltshire we are far more inclusive with mainstream settings.

**Action: HH** – to make an approach to Northumberland about their work

NB – Notional SEN, some children can join a school and no funding comes with them. Notional SEN discussion around the lag in receipt of pupil funding. Transition Into Primary School (TIPS) funding was made available which did impact upon the numbers of pupils transitioning into schools to prevent EHCP's.

**Action: AE** - HH asked AE to look at what the impact was of TIPS and AE to share the data she holds in this area.

JP – Asked a question around the Notional SEN and whether it was or could be ring-fenced ?

No, but we are looking to take a tougher stance with it around accountability for use of the funds.

NB commented that schools will ask for more EHCP's if we closely look at how much schools spend on SEN, which could be counter productive.

CM – Notional SEN % across schools does vary massively between , <1% to 15% of the school's budget overall and therefore there is a huge variance across our schools.

## 7 ISS Work Update – LF

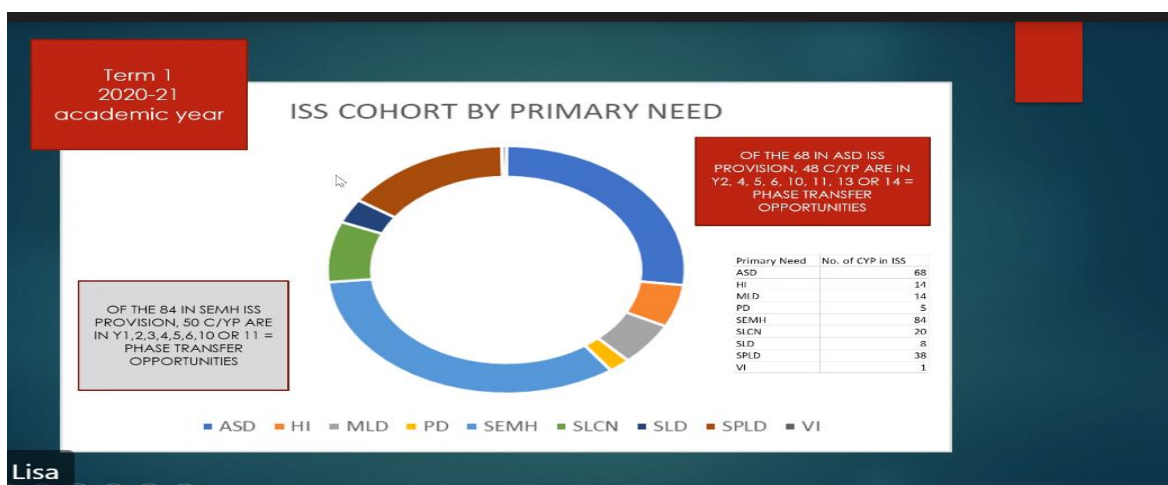
Lisa Fryer worked through her presentation detailing the work she was undertaking, and the progress and milestones achieved.

Lisa been in post since September and is working through the many layers of work and has started making progress in understanding the needs and demands of the cohort of pupils.

Currently 243 people in ISS placements – demand continues

Plotting of the pupils around the County border has raised questions regarding the quality of provision and Ofsted gradings including;

### Cohort showing primary need

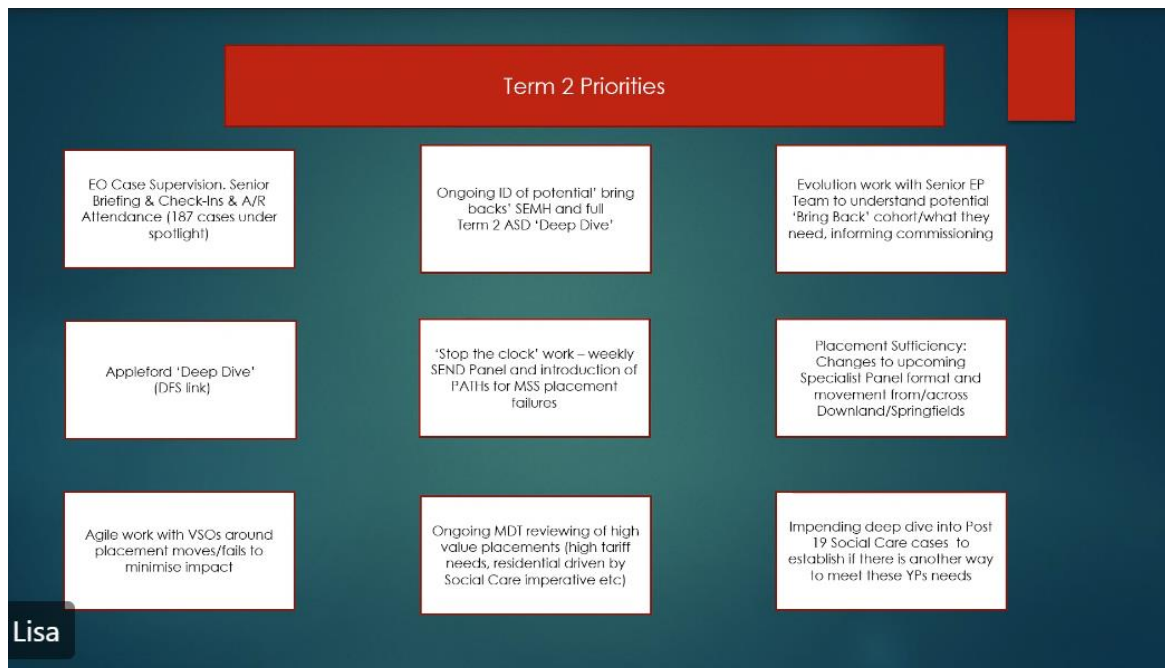


### Work Priorities



- Bringing pupils back in could reap savings between £246k to £425k, moving to somewhere different in September 2021, Lisa confident of £246k of savings
- Modelling to take place about pupils and savings from Sept 22 which would reap further savings.
- Pupils who could move into Local Offer from Sept 21 and Sept 22 have been identified.
- Looking at pupils who could move to our schools, working through their cases
- Working with Senior EP's – what support can they provide and are the pupils appropriately placed
- Out of the remaining pupils, 15 still undergoing discussion
- During Deep Dive there will be further savings which will be found. However, further requests for additional placements over time could off-set some of the savings
- Deep dive will also show we need to put more support into our schools.

## Term 2 Priorities



- Deep Dive into Appleford to take place – officers visiting school in November.
- How do we stop the dribble of pupils into Special and eventually going to ISS?
- Questioning of pupils going into Rowdeford where they are borderline mainstream / special
- Sufficiency – are we filling our Specials with pupils who could be placed elsewhere
- Work with social care – post-19 students who have been in expensive placements and have plateaued but as there is no other provision available, parents want their child to stay in the education system as they feel it provides safety and stability.

## 8 AOB

SG - keen to support the transition work from Primary into Secondary and keeping pupils in mainstream schools and is happy to work with officers.

MT – budget for 2021-22 for the High Needs Block will grow by approx. £5.5m (final figures to be released in December)

MT – Current consultation out with schools regarding any 'Block' transfers of funding - agreeing a transfer of 0.5% would deliver around £1.5m extra into the High Needs Block

MT - Centrally allocated Teachers pension cost contribution of £174k – most welcome towards costs of SEN.