

High Needs Block Group Meeting

6th May 2021

Present: Cate Mullen (Chair), Neil Baker, James Passmore, Stuart Hall, Alison Enever, Angela Everett, Lisa Fryer, Lisa Percy, Lyssy Bolton, Marie Taylor

1. Actions from Previous Meeting:

Worked through previous minutes and actions and reviewed progress against these with the members of the group.

CM updated on work looking at other authorities who had overcome or turned around a HNB deficit.

High Needs Review and Consultation – responses submitted including by Cabinet Members and supported by Schools Forum. WPCCC had also done valuable work to make the information accessible to parents and carers so they could also contribute.

Annex 3 – still to go back to Schools Forum. MT/CM have met with Legal to review. View that it is likely this will be helpful clarification but may not provide anything additional. **Action:** MT to follow up with Legal

Discussion regarding potential to remind / offer guidance for annual reviews so that health issues are captured in the right section. To follow up with DCO to ensure aligned with approach across BSW. **Action:** CM to flag with DCO.

Discussed potential training need for officers supporting schools and SENCOs to ensure needs of young person captured in correct section during reviews. Joint training would be helpful and to also include education welfare officers. Noted importance of being able to invite clinicians to attend annual review where appropriate. **Action:** AEV to follow up with team.

Discussed national trial regarding SENDIST appeals and benefit of taking case-law into account and feeding into our learning for the future.

2. High needs budget plan

CM shared updated plan format which also includes budget dashboard and overview of statutory demand. CM has hidden columns with savings numbers against activity areas for ease of reading but also to highlight discussion around how realistic and meaningful those figures are, and how to assure that savings have been realised through this work. Noted difference between cost avoidance and cashable savings.

MT updated on proposal for alternative approach to evaluating savings which will give overview of budgeted spend vs actual spend and includes reflection of unit price. This will allow us to scrutinise if budget pressures / savings are being driven by demand and/or interventions. Agreement that approach to looking at budget dashboard is the right one and being able to drill down into detail will help to

interrogate data. Greater transparency around funding will help with informed discussions.

Discussion regarding notional SEN, noted that this funding is not to support solely the EHCP cohort but for all pupils with SEN and this can be significantly larger numbers sitting below level of EHCP. Noted that there is also AWPU funding within the school, but that there are broader overheads that the school has to fund. Discussed need for a joint piece of work with schools to ensure good understanding of holistic picture of school finance and use of notional SEN and AWPU. Notional funding may not be being used for those children with more complex needs, but for the broader range of children with needs within the school. Agreement that any conversation with schools would need to be carefully considered and sensitive in order to support inclusion rather than inadvertently discourage it.

Discussion regarding change in census date and loss of funding to schools which is not offset by other sources e.g. COMF. F40 survey on free school meals and nationally £36 million gap being reported.

Suggestion that could link this with discussion around OAP to offer benchmark / good practice, and also with work to generate a blueprint for RB/ELP. Discussed importance of championing what an inclusive school looks like, and communication and engagement with parents and carers. Discussion around provision maps and OFSTED direction of travel into undertaking deep-dive into individual children's experience of schools. Template for sharing use of notional SEN for learners linked to OAP would be helpful and enable transparency for parents/carers. Suggestion that members look at information that Hampshire Council share around notional SEN and what it is.

Action: CM to share link from Hampshire's website.

Action: CM to e-mail outline of proposal regarding provision maps and share with this group for discussion and consideration of next steps with schools.

To look at role of school effectiveness in this discussion and how the SIA programme might support. Noted that schools would expect to be held to account for expenditure and how this might be supported, including around Governing Board's role to challenge. Good quality questions and linking to outcomes for learners will be key. **Action:** CM to flag with School Effectiveness.

Discussion regarding EHCP data dashboard. SH shared that parents who have spent time at home on home-learning have seen more closely their children's engagement with learning and this may be contributing to increase in applications for EHC assessments in March. **Action:** MT/CM to disaggregate data for EHCP requests to see more detail about age range, referral source and also to explore by area. Also, to add SEN Support numbers to this dashboard.

Action: AEv to lead on looking at particular demand in the west working with LB and SG.

ISS Review: LF gave update on review of ISS. SH supported around the importance of post-16 and need for really early conversations to discuss this with families. Need

for an 'offer' to be available to be publicised to our parents/carers. Suggestion to explore case studies of individual learners to see what could have been done differently and also examples of where we got it right to celebrate and learn from that. **Action:** LF to follow up on this.

Noted key cohort of primary age pupils with SEMH need. Query regarding who funds an ISS placement if it is social care driven. Noted that HNB funds the educational part of that placement.

HELM: update on HELM given and next steps to look at feedback and evolve further. Discussed portage goes to school.

3. Any Other Business

Contact from DfE regarding DSG management plan – action required to keep up to date and review again in June.