



Report to the Schools Forum

Title: SEND Quarterly Update Report

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1. Purpose of Agenda Item

- 1.1. The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an update to Schools Forum Funding Group on the following:
- a) Current projected expenditure against the high needs block and analysis of key variances.
 - b) Detail of actions in place to reduce expenditure and reliance on high cost placements.
 - c) An update on progress and time lines on the development of a banded funding mechanism for special school provision
- 1.2. This report details actions that are being put in place this academic year. It is anticipated that the impact on costs will be from September 2020. A further report will be brought to Schools Forum in December to present more detailed demand and cost assumptions going forwards.

2. Current Revenue Monitoring 2019-20

- 2.1. The budget monitoring paper elsewhere on this agenda shows the projected spend as at the end of August. High Needs budgets are projected to be £565k overspent for this financial year.
- 2.2. Appendix 1 to this report shows the budget for the High Needs block and projected spend against each of the headings.

2.3. A further risk of overspend has been identified against the budget for independent special school placements once the September pupil numbers and placements are all confirmed and incorporated in to the forecast.

3. Actions to Reduce Reliance on High Cost Placements

3.1. In line with the SEND Improvement Plan, there is a programme of actions being taken to reduce the numbers and costs of external placements and to impact on spend within the high needs block. The actions and associated timescales are summarised below.

Mainstream Schools

3.2. The SEND Service has moved into area teams as of September 2019 – this provides a more localised service to meet the needs of that area. A summary of the characteristics for each area is shown in the table below.

	Aylesbury	Chiltern and South Bucks	Wycombe
Population	32,234	26,312	27,303
Number of students with EHCPs	1353	868	894
Population of special schools	757	394	274

Data from May census 2019

3.3. Projects being launched this term include:

- a) Speech and Language Link – training being provided in the Autumn term with schools using this early intervention tool straight away. Evidence from other LAs that this has a direct impact on Speech and Language referrals and subsequently EHC assessment requests.
- b) Focus on Ordinarily Available Provision
 - i. Raising expectations of inclusion and what needs to be put in place prior to requests by schools for EHC Plans outlining what schools' duties are in an easy guide that all can access.
 - ii. Easy to use document and philosophy
 - iii. Training led by parents and schools – to be launched in Spring Term (Jan 2020)

- c) Side by Side work focusing on inclusion / inclusion auditing and reviewing of improvement.
- d) Nurture Group work – run by the Education Psychology (EP) Service with mainstream schools over the course of the year.
- e) Specific project supported by the EP Service aimed at needs of KS3 / 4 students in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) to support / prevent further escalation of unmet need – to be run this term.
- f) Surgeries – schools can come and ask advice of specialist teachers / SENOs without the need of a referral on certain days.

Links between mainstream and special schools

3.4. Side by side projects with a special school linking with a mainstream school

- a) Furze Down – Maximising Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) project
- b) Stony Dean and Amersham School in partnership
- c) Chiltern Wood – working with mainstream children at SEND Support

Special Schools

- a) Placement panels – review conducted May 2018 and changes being implemented from September 2019.
- b) Space review – 1st Planner conducting work this term looking at the space available in our current special schools using the BB104 guidance.
- c) Funding review
 - i. banding review using the Birmingham document as a model
 - ii. moving special school funding to a banding system
 - iii. allocation and moderation happening this term
 - iv. SEND Consultant leading on this to give capacity, Task and Finish Group in place
- d) Continuum of Provision and Entry / Exit criteria for special schools being developed this term – SEND Consultant leading on this.
- e) Overall Sufficiency Strategy to be created for February 2020.

Independent Placements

3.5. Over the summer SEN management held a full review of cases in independent placements with a view to targeting those on phase transfer this year for review attendance and potential to bring back in county. The financial impact of this action will be from September 2020.

Equipment

3.6. Review of high needs equipment definition compared to ordinarily available equipment. Process for schools to be reviewed and redefined.

Parents

3.7. Focus this term on ways to engage a wider range of parents through the Integrated Services Board.

Needs Analysis

3.8. The Council has commissioned a targeted piece of work from an external provider to:

- a) Conduct an analysis of needs of children and young people with EHCPs across the age range 0-25.
- b) Analyse current and projected demand
- c) Develop a tool that will support decision making for provision; a needs led approach

3.9. Outcomes of this project will be reported back to Schools Forum at the December meeting

Outcomes / Monitoring

3.10. Outcome measures will impact on the academic year 2020-21 and will include:

- Reduction in request for EHC Needs Assessments
- Reduction in exclusions of students with SEND
- Students with high levels of need being correctly placed in special provision in county
- Reduction in high cost placements (independent / out of county)
- Positive working relationships with schools
- Tracking unit costs of placements

Risks

3.11. Risks/barriers to delivery of actions include:

- SEND legislation promotes parental preference
- Rights to appeal/tribunals
- Pressure that challenge puts on the service
- High staff turnover causing pressures within the service
- Cost of transitional arrangements for implementation of banded funding

4. Banded Funding For Special Schools

4.1. A report was considered by Schools Forum in March 2019 outlining a time line for the development of a banded funding mechanism for high needs provision concentrating initially on implementation in special schools from April 2020.

4.2. A task and finish group is in place and work is progressing. A revised time line has been agreed by the working group and is shown below:

	Original Time Line	Revised Time Line
Mar-19	Agree task and finish group, through the Inclusion Hub, to review Banding options and descriptors	
Apr-19	Research and develop banding descriptors. Develop proposals for consultation	Agree Task and Finish Group membership – membership reflecting Special and mainstream provision (including schools with and without ARP provision)
	Original Time Line	Revised Time Line
May-19	Agree and issue consultation	Task and Finish Group meet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research banding descriptors from other local authorities with view to application in Buckinghamshire •
Jun-19	Consultation with schools on proposed banding descriptors	2 nd meeting of Task and Finish Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial review of proposals based on other LA schemes • Agree further work and revised approach for drafting of BCC proposed bands including engagement of additional capacity to support the development of the descriptors
Jul-19	Outcomes of consultation Modelling of new banding to allocate pupils to bands and	
Aug-19	confirm initial financial values	

Sep-19		<p>3rd meeting of T&F Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted with group and agreed adopt approach based on Birmingham model • SEN consultant to hold information/peer support meetings with Special School Head Teachers • Head teachers to carry out banding of all pupils based on Birmingham model
Oct-19	Schools Forum to sign off approach and initial modelling agree any transitional arrangements for gains and losses	<p>Moderation of sample of assessments through moderation panels</p> <p>Outcomes provided to Finance</p>
Nov-19		Financial Modelling to confirm initial banding values
Dec-19	Final sign off from Schools Forum for band values, moderation process, etc	Initial report to Schools Forum outlining proposed approach and initial work on financial values, and implications
	Original Time Line	Revised Time Line
Jan-20		Final sign off for band values at January Schools Forum meeting
Feb-20	Issue provisional budgets based on existing pupils, in same time scale as mainstream schools	Issue provisional budgets based on existing pupils, in same time scale as mainstream schools
Mar-20		
Apr-20	Banding mechanism for funding special schools to be in place for 2020-21 financial year	Banding mechanism for funding special schools to be in place for 2020-21 financial year

4.3. The revised time line is still expected to achieve a banded funding mechanism for special schools by April 2020 with sign off at the January Schools Forum meeting for band values and transitional arrangements.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. To note the current update on high needs budgets and actions to reduce reliance on high cost placements and to ensure resources are spend in the most effective way.**
- 5.2. To note the revised time line for the delivery of a banded funding mechanism for special schools from April 2020.**