



## BRIEFING NOTE

**To:** Schools Forum                      **Author:** Mark Longstaff

**Date:** Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**Title of Briefing:** Update – SEND Working Group

### **Purpose**

This briefing note: sets out the background to and remit of the SEND Working Group; outlines the membership; provides a review of progress; summarises the work plan for the next 12 months; and describes the links with School Forum's annual planning cycle.

### **Background and Remit**

In January 2015 Schools Forum was briefed about the level of resources required to meet High Needs SEN arrangements for the forthcoming year. Forum recognised the need for a significant piece of work on how SEN provision is resourced. Concerns were expressed about the range of ways in which special schools were funded and it was felt that a more robust approach was needed to allocating funding. Forum agreed that a sub-group should be set up to review SEN Provision. Forum commented that:

- Comparable data should be sourced to check performance with other authorities.
- The approach should be proactive and strategic rather than reactive.
- There should be a clear focus on the outcome required from the review, consideration should be given as to what would represent success in three years time and there should be a programme of work towards that vision.
- There was a need to strengthen capacity to forecast demand and consider how it will be met.
- A timeline should be developed with the aim of having a plan to move forward by the end of the academic year.

In response to Forum's comments the SEND working group was established in the autumn term of 2015.

### **Membership**

The initial membership of the group was:

- Elaine Appleby, Schools Finance, ENGIE
- Mike Armstrong, Research and Intelligence NTC
- Moira Banks, School Improvement, NTC

- Andy Clark, Whitley Bay High
- Diane Cooper, Kings Priory School
- Dave Erskine, Southlands School
- Peter Gannon, Silverdale
- Joanne Harries, Research and Intelligence NTC
- Angela James, School Improvement NTC
- Michael Johnston, Commissioning and Investment NTC
- Anne Oldham, Monkseaton High School
- John Thompson, SEN Inclusion NTC
- Scott Woodhouse, Chair, Commissioning and Investment NTC

At the January School's Forum meeting it was agreed to circulate the remit of the group and the action plan to all schools and members of Forum with a request for additional members. This has resulted in the following additional volunteers:

- Dave Anderson, AEN Leader, Churchill School
- Cathy Burgess, SENCO, Holystone Primary School
- Mark Burgess, Deputy Head Teacher and SENCO, Preston Grange Primary School
- Kate Byrne, Head Teacher, King Edward Primary
- Anna de Courcy, SENCO, Benton Dene Primary School.
- Jill Forster, Head Teacher, Benton Dene Primary School
- Leanne Hyde, SENCO, Waterville Primary School
- Lisa Judson, Assistant Head Teacher, Grasmere Academy
- Bronia Reece, Behaviour Co-ordinator, Marden High School
- Rebecca Watson, Head of Middle School, Kings Priory School

### **Review of Progress**

The Working Group met on three occasions in the autumn term of 2015. The priority was to consider those areas of provision where there was known to be significant pressure specifically from the:

- Increase in demand for ASD provision
- Pressure on the Dyslexia Service
- Capacity of the SEMH Primary ARP
- Demand for support from LEAPS for two year-olds
- Placement top-up funding both pre and post-16.

The group also recognised the need to consider other key developments and drivers including:

- Ofsted's planned SEND reviews
- DfE's forthcoming review of High Needs funding arrangements
- The principle of funding following the learner and the importance of the 'home' school maintaining oversight of pupils' progress.
- The need to focus on outcomes for young people.

- The potential implications of the SEND Code of Practice, Education Health and Care Plans and personal budgets.
- The work underway to strengthen commissioning of specialist placements via the NE12 arrangements.
- The opportunities that may be available to develop Supported Internships as a route to employment.
- The importance of a culture of inclusion facilitated by an updated inclusion strategy to improve early identification of needs and; effective pathways, gateways, panels and decision making arrangements.

The group made recommendations to the September Schools Forum which took account of the developments and drivers above and included a proposal for further work to be undertaken on addressing those areas of provision experiencing particular pressures. The Working Group then brought recommendations to the December meeting of School's Forum to address those pressures and to arrive at a balanced budget at the start of the academic year. These recommendations were accepted and resulted in a decision to transfer £1.184m from the School Block to the High Needs Block in 2016/17.

### **Work Plan for next 12 months**

The paper endorsed by Forum in December included a summary of the key topics for the Working Group to address in 2016 -17 and beyond. These have now been translated into a Work Plan for the next 12 months. The objectives of the Group are to:

- Maintain oversight of spending priorities in relation to High Needs Funding
- Assist in strategic planning of provision across the Borough, working with partners, taking a 3 to 5 year horizon
- Help to target scarce resources on pupils with the greatest level of need
- Assure value for money
- Ensure that the local SEND offer evolves to meet needs
- Optimise outcomes for children and young people
- Make recommendations to School's Forum on ways forward.

### **Key Tasks for 2016-17**

The group will address the following areas of work:

- Consultation, launch and implementation of the inclusion strategy (consulting in Summer term with a view to launch in September 2016).
- Development of a SEND Needs Analysis report to inform planning (with a view to reporting key findings to Forum in July).
- Undertaking the following thematic reviews:
  - Top-up / Banding System in Special Schools
  - Supported Internships (now underway)
  - ASD review
  - SEMH / ESBF funding

(Timescales for ASD review to be confirmed. Aim is to complete the other reviews by October)

- Supporting the monitoring of commissioned services:
  - Review / update of service specifications and performance targets.
  - Review of 3 year cycle and reporting arrangements.(Both tasks to be completed by the end of May 2016).
- Considering feedback from specific service reviews (these are the final reviews to complete from the current 3 year cycle):
  - Monkseaton Physical Disabilities ARP (Meeting scheduled 17 March)
  - Motor Skills Support Woodlawn (Meeting held 10 February)
- Supporting reviews of Health-related support / joint commissioning / arrangements for health and care support:
  - CAMHS, Benton Dene
  - Therapeutic Services, Benton Dene
  - Occupational Therapy Support, Woodlawn(To be completed by October)
- Reviewing High Needs Block performance and issues, developing recommendations for School's Forum for 2017-18 and considering the longer term strategy to align needs and resources. (Recommendations to be formed by end of October)
- Preparing for Ofsted SEND reforms inspection. (Specific action and timescales to be agreed in May)
- Informing the School's Forum response to the first phase of the DfE's High Needs Funding consultation (Responses due by 17April).

#### **Links with School Forum's annual planning cycle.**

The tasks above will be managed to enable the results to inform the review of the High Needs Block for 2017-18 and to enable School's Forum to consider recommendations as part of the autumn planning cycle. This work will be undertaken in the context of the DfE's intention to introduce a national High Needs Funding Formula.

#### **Schedule of meetings up to summer 2016**

- 6<sup>th</sup> January
- 9<sup>th</sup> March
- 11<sup>th</sup> May
- 6<sup>th</sup> July