

Minutes of Schools Forum

2 December 2024

-: Present :-

Stuart Bellworthy, Laurence Frewin and Jake Grinsill

(Also in attendance:)

1. Apologies/Changes to Membership - Sarah Tomkinson

Sarah Tomkinson Head teacher at White Rock Primary School and I'm representing the maintained school.

Nancy Meehan Director of children's services.

Rachel Setter Divisional director of Learning Partnerships for children's services

Rob Parr Finance support for children's services at Torbay.

Dan Hamer Head of Virtual School

Steven Hulme Headteacher of the Lodestar Academy and I'm the representative for the Pupil Referral unit. (tsat)

Stuart Bellworthy CEO Connect Academy Trust Primary Academy

Sally Banfield Headteacher at Coombe Packard School and I'm representing the special schools.

Jake Grinsill Head teacher at Ilsham Academy primary academies.

Tim Stephens Private nursery representation is through Governance within primaries.

Clive Star Secretary, governor, Rep representing thinking Schools Academy trust. (tsat)

Jayne Jones Colleton St. Mary Preschool representing early years.

Alex Newton Principal Spires college, representing maintained secondary.

Stewart Biddles Primary academies and I'm the chief executive of Riviera Education Trust, which is Oldway, Shippy and Rosland's primaries in Torbay.

Graham Pirt Interim Divisional Director of education and send.

Tamsin Summers Paignton Academy on the deputy principal. (tsat)

Emma Kerridge Head of service for early years and home learning for the local authority.

Laurence Frewin Principle and chief executive at South Devon College representing further education post 16.

Anya Williams Early Years finance and business officer.

Louise Willmott – Clerk PA to Divisional Directors

Apologies

Hannah Baker

Ian Roswell

Jim Piper (tsat)

2. Minutes of the last meeting - Sarah Tomkinson

Agreed

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Agreement from health re the audit of EHCPs from last year. ICB and Health agreed to pay 50% £238,000 which has been received, if the agreement is not finalized by December, they will pay the 2nd 50%, we have now invoiced for this and are still working on getting to an agreed position by 1st April 2025

Action

Update on next meeting

3. Financial Report - Rob Parr

Financial Report

Rob Parr went through the financials and confirmed the forecast overspend of £1,334 million the 3 main factors being South Devon college placements, Independent special school placements and IOTAS packages which are those offset by various things like the health contribution.

The Safety Valve is submitted, they have confirmed that they will pay the last payment for this year, we have had no feedback, positive or negative.

Action

NM to advise numbers gone to tribunal for EHCP's and average costs

4. EHCP, Special School & other HN Adjustments 24-25 -Rob Parr

EHCP, Special School & other HN Adjustments 24-25

Rob Parr presented the School's Forum with an update on Education Health and Care plan funding for 23/24 and 24/25, he advised that we are still seeing significant numbers of EHCP's coming through the system.

Data to be shared on the landscape of Torbay in terms of the downward trend of applications and age relating to EHCPs and the impact on both primary schools and special schools.

5. De-delegation decisions for 25/26 allocations. - Rob Parr

De-delegation decisions for 25/26

Rob Parr

Action

Just maintained schools can vote. All maintained Heads agree, apart from Insurance which will go to the risk protection arrangement with the DfE. Insurance will be invoiced, Alex to check with James.

National Funding Formular Rob Parr

DECISIONS

The agreed £92,000 underspend of Early Years is to be brought into the High Needs block. Agreed.

The additional £75,000 underspend is to be on a flat rate. Agreed

6. Safety Valve update - Graham Pirt**Safety Valve Update** Graham Pirt

Target is 1,488 EHCP's by end of 31st March 2025

The current position is £1,627. A net reduction is needed of 139 which is not going to happen. The increase is significantly lower than the national trend.

To August we have received 157 requests for statutory assessment plus 22 that transferred to the LA.

Central government in the new administration are uneasy about the impact of safety on children with high needs. 10 local authorities are being invited to work with ISOS to understand and make clear that need. NM has applied to the DfE for Torbay to be part of research and is looking positive for Torbay.

Some schools there are a large amount (one being 91%) of requests for EHCP's coming from parents which puts a delay in the process.

Next year 25/26, we're looking at trying to draw down 1.5 million against the safety valve and then 26/27, we're looking to draw down 3.1 million.

Graham stated that we have more young people requiring places than there are spaces in the special schools currently.

Dan mentioned that there is a disconnect, which the ISOS research will look at between tribunals, judicial reviews for section 19 where those people aren't respecting the professional assessment process that these children have been through already, and therefore one of the challenges is that whole understanding that this is a multi-agency response is not an LA school thing.

7. Early Years Funding Process - Emma Kerridge**Early Years Funding Process**

Emma Kerridge explained the 2 funding processes.

Schools have agreed to go to the Synergy system to get live information.

8. Distribution of Early Years underspend from 23/24 - Emma Kerridge/Rob Parr**Distribution of Early Years underspend from 23/24**

Emma Kerridge explained the underspend that we've had for 20/23/24 and the recommendations questions around that. One of the main ones being that reverse of the high needs block for contribution for ALFI. So that £100,000 fine needs block has had historically made a contribution to ALFI to allow that for the special educational needs provision for early years children. However, in the context of what we've heard today around the high needs block and the pressures on the high needs block, the recommendation has been because there has been a significant under spending early years to reverse that decision and then look at the re allocation of the remainder of the funding.

Family hub funding has been agreed for another financial year although we are not sure how much this will be.

Action

De Delegation decisions. Alex Newton to check with James if he is happy for the Insurance charges to be invoiced

9. Wraparound Childcare - Emma Kerridge**Wraparound Childcare Emma Kerridge**

Emma has put together a report based on the two different funding processes that happened for our PVI sector and our school based sector we have received a number of queries in over the last six months around the ability for schools to receive an adjustment payment after children join their earliest provision after head count and currently the process doesn't allow for that to happen whereas it does for our PVI sector. That's partly because our PVI sector use a funding system called synergy.

The recommendations are either that schools continue with the system that they've got or that schools move on to our synergy funding system which would allow them to have that opportunity to forecast in real time at the beginning of each term, then make a head count input and then an adjustment input after that, the synergy system also allows for our schools rather than using a different system to use their EYPP and put their EYPP applications through there.

Action

Schools have agreed to go to Synergy – Emma Kerridge

10. SEND governance - Graham Pirt/Dan Hamer**SEND governance Graham Pirt/Dan Hamer**

Graham went through the presentation in the report.

We have written out twice for a chair of the local education and inclusion board and would be grateful for a volunteer.

Action

Request was made for a volunteer to become Chairperson of the Local Education and Inclusion Board.

11. Specialist Education sufficiency provision - Graham Pirt**Specialist Education sufficiency provision Graham Pirt**

Graham went through the presentation in the report.

Action

Memberships to be shared of CCIB, Check & Challenge, SSB and SLAIP, LEIB with ToR.

Graham talked about 25 young people with severe learning difficulties with no places in Torbay and the local authority decision around commissioned numbers, he agreed that further discussion was needed involving more people to keep it much more cost effective, right, students in the right place.

12. MTS/Section 19/ERP's - Dan Hamer

Deferred

13. Home to School Transport - Rachel Setter

Deferred