



Minutes of the Schools Forum

13 October 2016

-: Present :-

Roger Hughes (Chairman), Morris Adam, Lynsey Kings, Mike Lock, Daneian Rees, Clive Star, Adam Tapp, Jan Chopping, Jim Piper, Julie Shears and Tim Stephens Lisa Finn, Finance Manager, Dorothy Hadleigh, Head of Service-SEND, Debbie Horn, School Improvement Officer, Andy Dempsey, Director of Children's Services, Robb Parr, Principal Accountant

(Also in attendance: Michael Freeman, Clerk)

1. Elect Chair and Vice Chair

The forum voted to re-elect Roger Hughes as Chair with 6 votes. Mike Lock was also re-elected to position of Vice Chair with 6 votes.

2. Apologies/Changes to Membership

Apologies were received from Debbie Main, Maurice Codd, Dan Hallam & Simon Niles. The Forum welcomed Jan Chopping to the group as Secondary Schools Governor.

3. Minutes of the last meeting 30th June 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 30th June 2016 were agreed, with a slight amendment to the standing orders.

4. Matters arising

4.1 TESS - Appointment of staff update

Refer to item 6a) on this agenda

4.2 Sexual Orientation and Identity Project

Debbie Horn presented a paper detailing the scope of the contract with EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia). Senior Leadership training for primary and secondary schools scheduled for 7th December, although this may change to January dependant on whether a venue is found. The forum agreed to invite schools to host the training rather than holding it in a hotel. Staff training days will be confirmed at a later date.

Debbie Horn to lead.

5. Annual Report on High Cost Placements

Dorothy Hadleigh presented a paper on high cost SEN placements.

The education component for joint funded placements has a budget of £763k (£940k in 2015/16) with a forecast outturn of £613k (£715k in 2015/16), due to a reduction in the number of children placed in provisions outside of the Local Authority. (11 this year, down from 19 last year).

Independent School Placements are currently monitored by caseworkers half termly. It was noted that whilst there was no significant increase in the number of school age placements, the number of post 16 placements had almost doubled over the last three years, largely due to the change in legislation requiring statements to now run until the age of 25.

Due to these being funded through the DSG, it was agreed that a deeper analysis of spending is required; Andy Dempsey, Dorothy Hadleigh, Lisa Finn and Rachael Williams will liaise on this.

6. Standing Items

6.1 TESS - Roger Hughes

Roger Hughes presented a progress report to the forum. There is still a shortage of TESS social workers, recruitment in the summer ultimately proved unsuccessful. The TESS review proved successful, with schools overall reporting they found the service extremely useful. From 1st November there will be changes to how MASH referrals are managed.

6.2 CAMHS - Roger Hughes

An update report was shared with the Forum. It was noted that funding from the Schools Forum (£500k over three years, taken from the DSG) will stop in August 2017. The Forum agreed that this service was proven to be valuable to schools and therefore Andrew Dempsey will contact the Foundation Trust to discuss next steps for this service and future funding proposals.

6.3 Improving Outcomes for Vulnerable Pupils (IOVP) - Roger Hughes

Roger Hughes gave an update on the project. Now running for 10 months, it was noted that there are now 17 Autism Champions in schools, with more being trained. Initial feedback from the Autism Champions has been encouraging, with staff seeing the value of communicating with other schools. Dorothy Hadleigh noted that all Grammar Schools will also have an Autism Champion in the future. It was requested that this type of paper is shared at future Schools Forums.

6.4 Challenging Behaviour - Adam Morris

Details of the income and expenditure of the Challenging Behaviour Project were shared by Roger Hughes. It is anticipated that at the end of the project (currently 31st March 2018) there will be an underspend of £177k.

6.5 Autism - Roger Hughes

A finance report for the Autism Implementation Group was shared with the forum, showing the group estimated to be running on budget up to August 2017.

7. Financial Issues

7.1 2016/17 Dedicated Schools Grant Projected Outturn

DSG funded activities are forecast to overspend by £105k, and likely to increase, this is unprecedented since the inception of DSG.

Statementing/EHCP Contingency and Special Schools Contingency are the main overspends, with underspends in Joint funded placements, portage and staffing vacancies. An investigation into any possible savings that can be made will be reported back to the Schools Forum at the next meeting.

7.2 Statementing Funding for 15/16 and 16/17

The Forum was shown a breakdown of statementing funding. Based on current forecasts, Statementing /EHCP contingency will overspend by £155k in 2016/17.

7.3 Specific Education Projects Contingency (former Equal Pay Reserve)

Based upon spend to date on Autism, Challenging Behaviour and Improving Outcomes for vulnerable pupils there is a possibility that there could be a significant balance of £440k. Of course if spend on the above projects did increase this balance will be reduced. However, Andy Dempsey has requested a more detailed report and balance sheet, detailing future funding. This will be addressed for the December meeting of the Forum.

8. Items for next meeting

2016/17 – DSG projected outturn

DfE Fair Funding Results of Consultation – If Available

DfE Education Excellence Everywhere - Update

Post 16 analysis of value for money on placement outcomes and finances – Dorothy Hadleigh

Vulnerable pupils report with outcome analysis from Dorothy Hadleigh – update

Update from Andy Dempsey regarding request to fund TESS with an additional £115k for 2018/19

9. Future meeting dates

1st December 2016 - 09:00-11.30 Mezz 3, Tor Hill House

19th January 2017 - 09:00-11.30 Mezz 3, Tor Hill House

9th March 2017- 09:00-11.30 Mezz 3, Tor Hill House