

Covid Prevention Funding Schools Forum 11th March 2021

Contextual Information

Torbay Local Area has a higher number of Education Health and Care Plans than all other Authorities in England. Although the requests for statutory assessments have reduced during the pandemic, we anticipate that this may only be a lag in the system and a surge in demand for Education Health and Care Plans may occur when schools fully reopen. This has already been noted with an average of 10 requests being presented to panel each week.

Alongside the national catch up and recovery programmes being proposed by the Department for Education the Local Authority wish to work in partnership with schools and families to overcome some of the difficulties children may experience on re-entry to school, without the need for a longer term Education Health and Care Plan.

For many children lost learning and challenging behaviour maybe a short term consequence of the pandemic and through a short term offer of support, they may quickly get back on track.

For this reason Torbay Council will use £250k of Covid Investment to support the reintegration of children into their school. It is anticipated that this fund could support short term interventions.

Principles of Providing Support

- The support will be provided for a six week period only to enable integration back into school support processes.
- There will not be a request statutory assessment for at least two terms, due to the evidence of intervention required and impact.
- The funds will not be used for children already awaiting an EHCP assessment.
- The funds will not be used for children with an Education Health and Care Plan.
- The funds will be for mainstream education providers only.
- The funds will need to be matched with an equivalent offer from the education provider.
- The funds will focus on children not attending school on a full time basis and/or children who are attending but not able to access education due to anxiety or behaviour.
- The support will be provided in the school, children will not be placed with an externally commissioned service.

Management of the process

- The children eligible for support will be managed by a panel of school leaders, who will prioritise children across the system.
- The panel will not be able to award an extension to the six week period.
- An application window will open and all awards will be made within a single window (depending on school re-opening plans – requests in by end of April – provision in place May /June)
- Outcomes monitoring through attendance and engagement figures

Recommendation

- School Forum accept the additional funding being provided.
- School Forum delegate the design of the system to the Higher Needs Recovery Group and ask for a progress/outcomes report in June 2021.

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