

Higher Needs Group Update 6th May 2021

Introduction

The Higher Needs Recovery Group has reconvened and held two meetings. The minutes of the group are attached for School Forum Members information. This report is brought to forum to show the work that is being conducted and to ensure that the School Forum is assured by the direction of travel of the group.

The Higher Needs Recovery Group was established to review actions within the recovery plan and proactively work alongside School Forum to identify any further opportunities for change and reduction in spend.

Work that has been conducted against the recovery plan and next steps

The following overview shows the progress that is being made against each agreed action.

Strengthening an inclusive and accountable culture



Action required	Progress to date	Where next?	RAG Rating
Establishment of a Peer to Peer Challenge system	<p>The secondary peer to peer challenge group is well established with regular attendees. The group are pro-actively trying to seek solutions for young people that have vulnerabilities by the use of managed moves and support packages. Young people are being flagged at an earlier opportunity for behavioural needs, allowing a greater amount of planning.</p> <p>It is difficult during this academic year to measure comparator data for exclusions and fixed term exclusions due to the nature of attendance during the pandemic.</p> <p>Managed moves are being used as a successful means of preventing exclusions. They are being overseen by the Pupil Referral Panel and reviewed and managed through the Secondary Peer Group.</p> <p>3 Managed Transfers have been used to prevent Permanent Exclusions. All 3 have been successful to date,</p> <p>5 Permanent Exclusions have been prevented by early work between schools, the SEN team and the Vulnerable Pupils team. 4 of these continue to be successful and one failed as the parents and child effused to attend the new setting.</p>	<p>Sharing of data (once available) on exclusions, managed moves back with Heads Forums (Currently shared at the Local Education Board)</p> <p>Primary zero exclusion project</p>	

	<p>Annual reviews are being better used to establish whether an EHCP can be amended to better meet need and maintain a mainstream school place.</p> <p>Strong evidence of focused work on vulnerable children throughout the pandemic conducted by all schools with a high percentage of vulnerable and SEND pupils still attending throughout all phases of lockdown.</p>		
Revision of the Fair Access Protocol	The Fair Access Protocol has been revised to better meet the needs of vulnerable students and to clarify the circumstances under which the school can make a fair access representation. This has been used for over 18 months and further versions have been consulted upon and adopted.	Keep under review	
Providing independent advice to parents	<p>The service has been commissioned and operational. The service started in January 2020 so has not had a normal year to operate. The service resources were diverted to support a wider range of children and families struggling with Covid related anxiety.</p> <p>Now that the service has returned to its core role, 57 families have been supported with advice about potential exclusions.</p> <p>19 have received a wider needs assessment leading to support from the Imagine This partnership and/or Early Help.</p>	<p>The service resumed from March 2021 and will be monitored against normal KPIs this year.</p> <p>Staff are moving from a mediation to a solution focussed delivery model to empower all parties and increase the capacity of the service.</p>	
Providing training and information to governors – including an SEND Audit	<p>SEND audits conducted in 100% of Schools and Colleges within Torbay (2019/2020)</p> <p>The audits show a good level of engagement and commitment to SEN children and an increased understanding</p>	Local Authority Graduated Approach document to be updated and consulted upon.	

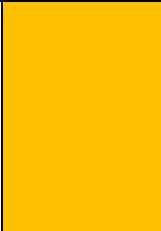
	<p>across leadership. The accountability framework for SEN pupils has improved since the previous audits.</p> <p>The findings of the audit demonstrate that more work is required on SEN Support and a common approach to inclusion. There is evidence of some very strong practice in some schools and MATS that needs to be shared.</p> <p>SENDCO network well attended and offered termly. Agenda is both LA and School informed and is driving forward key changes required. Strong evidence in Ofsted reports that schools are offering good SEND services.</p>		
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Ensuring children and young people have access to alternative and bespoke provision

Action required	Progress to date	Next steps	Trajectory
Exclusion recovery process	The mechanism for exclusion recovery have been adopted and are being used.	Debt recovery process being enacted	
Cost recovery for placements	Cost recovery activity is in place and invoices issued to schools.	EHE decision is being reviewed by School Forum	
Commissioned placement reductions	<p>The commissioned placement costs are rising due to sector pricing and demand. Individual packages are being reviewed and stepped down where appropriate. The savings on individual packages range between £5 - £25k</p> <p>We are commissioning less out of area placements and using local based provisions where we have secured good value for money. The spend on packages in alternative providers has reduced and children are now taught within the area resource bases created.</p> <p>The commission framework for alternative providers has been fully redesigned and is heavily focused on safeguarding and outcomes. Where outcomes are strong block purchasing has started and this has helped to manage overall costs of placements.</p>	Look at further block purchase opportunities to reduce costs or mitigate demand management.	

<p>Alternative provision within our local area.</p>	<p>The STEPS provision continues to provide for children that have previously been taught in out of area provision or bespoke tutoring. The provision is being well managed by PCSA and there is ongoing work between the school and SEND team to ensure pupils needs can be met.</p> <p>The Post 16 Provision at SDC has been expanded to provide for six young people with considerable SEMH needs. Following a successful pilot year this has increased to include 8 young people.</p> <p>Sixth day provision for children excluded from Primary Schools has been enhanced and interim measures have been put in place to have a dedicated space away from Chestnut.</p> <p>The Post 16 Panel considers Post 16 requests for specialist provisions and high cost bespoke packages. The close scrutiny has enabled local providers to offer creative options which have resulted in better outcomes for students and value for money.</p>	<p>Continue to build upon the infrastructure of area resource bases.</p>	
<p>Appropriate contribution from health and social care.</p>	<p>Work has progressed with Health Colleagues to consider funding of children. An agreement has been reached between the Local Authority and Health Colleagues to jointly fund packages of support for children that do not meet the DST criteria but are requiring bespoke packages. A dedicated panel is established and meets frequently. We are assured that we are only providing the funding for education provision within all joint funded placements.</p>	<p>There will be further work with Health colleagues regarding use of Element 3 funding for health related support in schools.</p>	

Ensuring the right children, achieve the right level of support, at the right cost

Action required	Progress to date	Next steps	Trajectory
<p>Request for statutory assessment stemming demand</p>	<p>The requests for statutory assessments continues to grow, however the number of issued plans have remained consistent with the previous year. The panel has been challenging the need for an EHCP in a rigorous manner and giving advice where appropriate on how the needs of</p>	<p>Continue the rigorous challenge process around panel decision making.</p>	

	<p>children and young people can be met through SEN support.</p> <p>The Early Help system and SEND process have been carefully considered to ensure that the right help can be given at the right time. The revised way of working in Early Help will be supportive of children not escalating to EHCP.</p> <p>The demand for EHCP reduced during the pandemic, however following the return of children to school in March 2021 the demand has increased significantly. Work is being conducted to consider if this is an ongoing need or a delay in referrals.</p>	<p>Work with schools to predict the ongoing need emerging from the pandemic</p>	
<p>Element 3 top up and banding review.</p>	<p>Panel for decision making on the top up has been established. Monitoring officers have taken on the responsibility of allocating the funds to each plan and conducting work on the funding as part of the annual review. This has created greater consistency in the plans that have been reviewed but does not bring about the whole scale change.</p>	<p>The review of the banded funding mechanism has been delayed and will be a focus.</p>	

Additional work progressed by the Higher Needs Recovery Group

The Higher Needs Recovery Group were asked by the School Forum to manage and help to produce the process of allocating Covid Intervention Funding. The group supported the Local Authority to create the criteria and the awarding process. The children and young people have now been identified and the money awarded to the School Forum has been provided for 115 pupils. An impact report on the work that the grant has supported will be received for each pupil/school in the week beginning the 28th June 2021.

Below is a summary of the criteria of children identified

Total number of children identified 115

Reason for identification

Part Time	Not Returned	Displaying Anxiety Related to Covid
26	31	107

(some pupils have two or more identified need)

The total allocation of funding was

Total =£249,895

Primary Phase = £80,401

Secondary Phase = £169,494

Recommendations and decisions

- School Forum note the report and the minutes of the meetings.
- School Forum review the work that is proposed as next steps and agree if any additional work is requested of the Higher Needs Group

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