

Schools Forum

Thursday 20 June 2024

Via MS Teams

Schools Forum online meeting

- In order to facilitate the smooth operation of the meeting:
- Please mute your microphones when not speaking
- Officers will briefly present their reports, using a PowerPoint presentation to get across the key aspects
- Use the 'Raise your hand' facility if you would like to raise a question or comment
- Alternatively use 'Chat' to advise the Chair that you would like to speak
- Turn off your video if bandwidth becomes an issue
- Please note that this meeting is being recorded and will be posted on YouTube



Paper A
Minutes and Matters Arising
14 March 2024
(Bill Dowell)

Minutes and matters arising - 14 March 2024

	Action	Name	Update
4	Schools Forum Slides including the link to the Delivering Better Value (DVB) resource pack to be circulated.	Jo Jones	Completed by Jo Jones.
4	Link to the Shropshire Ordinarily Available Provision (SOAP) framework to be circulated.	David Shaw	The framework is now available on the Local Offer website here SEN support Shropshire Council
4	Comparative finance information and benchmarking, including High Needs and Notional SEND funding, to be identified and presented to Schools Forum.	David Shaw	Postponed to September meeting.
5	Identify any challenges/training needs related to SEND and supporting the increased range of SEND needs in mainstream. These should be shared with Alison Ashley to raise with the national Teaching School Council during the presentation.	School Forum members and Alison Ashley	Ali Ashley to update.
8	Raise challenges regarding school and SEND funding with MPs and the DfE to increase awareness of the challenges being experienced.	Kirstie Hurst-Knight/David Shaw	<p>MP briefing drafted and completed in April 2024 with comparative funding information included for reference. The briefing has also been shared with Bill Dowell.</p> <p>The matter has also been raised formally with the DfE, who have confirmed they have shared the information and examples provided with the ESFA.</p>

Paper A
Minutes and Matters Arising
14 March 2024
(Bill Dowell)

Paper B

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2023/24 (Stephen Waters)

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

- The 2023-24 outturn position for the DSG is a £4.486m in-year deficit.
- This deficit needs to be added to the £2.181m DSG surplus carried forward from 2022-23 resulting in a cumulative DSG deficit of £2.304m

	£ m'
DSG Surplus carried forward from 2022-23	(2.181)
Outturn 2023-24	4.486
DSG deficit to be carried forward into 2024-25	2.304

- 2023-24 outturn by block:

	2023-24 DSG Allocation £ m'	2023-24 Expenditure £ m'	2023-24 Variance £ m'
Early Years Block	17.868	17.954	0.087
Centrally controlled or retained High Needs Block	28.997	33.125	4.128
Additional High Needs Funding	1.644	1.263	-0.382
Central Schools Services Block	2.378	2.647	0.268
De-Delegated Items from Schools Block	0.451	0.485	0.034
School Growth Fund from Schools Block	0.303	0.654	0.351
Total	51.641	56.127	4.486

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

- **Early Years Block**

- The outturn position for the Early Years Block is a £0.087m overspend against a provisional budget of £17.868m.
- The overspend is explained by a £0.287m budget pressure on SEND Support against a budget set of £0.600m. The demand experienced on this budget has grown in recent years with Shropshire seeing a growing number of children presenting with a range of development and emotional difficulties which require support.
- This position on the Early Years budget is provisional and could change once the final 2023-24 Early Years DSG allocation is published in July 2024.

- **High Needs Block**

- The outturn position for the High Needs Block is an in-year deficit of £4.128m against a centrally controlled High Needs Budget of £28.997m. This budget excludes the place funding element of the High Needs Block totalling £9.515m.

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

- High Needs Block

High Needs Budget Area	2021-22 Outturn £ m'	2022-23 Outturn £ m'	2023-24 £ m'	2023-24 Variance £ m'	Reason for Variance
Post 16 FE College Placements	1.844	1.662	1.685	- 0.475	Increase in expenditure of £0.023m compared to 2022-23 outturn position. The number of EHC Plans in the 16-25 age range, indicates that the % increase in EHC plans is increasing significantly so you would expect large expenditure growth in this budget area. Instead, there is a higher proportion of post 16 pupils attending Independent Special Schools or independent alternative providers
Independent Providers	6.666	8.466	13.982	3.910	Expenditure for 2023-24 is 64% higher than 2022-23. The overspend relates to the Independent Special Schools budget where we have seen a large increase in numbers since September. The average termly cost of a placement has also increased in 2023-24 reflecting price inflationary pressures, plus demand for additional staffing support (LSA's). More frequent use of independent alternative providers, particularly in relation to post 16 as well as an increase in numbers attending out of county, independent special schools
% Increase in Independent Providers Expenditure		27%	64%		Higher % increase than anticipated due to increased demand for this type of placement

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

- **High Needs Block**
- **Independent Special Schools**
- Increase in demand shown by increase in numbers
- Increase in average termly cost per placement (both due to price inflation pressures and additional staffing support – increasing complexity). Typical placement cost at our most frequently used provider is £60,000 to £72,000 per annum which is over double the cost of a Shropshire Special School.
- Increase in value of, and number of contributions to complex, joint funded placements with social care and the Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- To counter this increase in demand for Independent Special School placements we have increased top-up funding to mainstream schools, building capacity in SEND Hubs attached to mainstream schools, increased top-up funding through an increase in banding levels and capacity in our 3 Special Schools and are providing robust challenge around any placement decisions through the SEND teams's Commissioning and Procurement panel.
- **Top Up Funding to Special Schools**
- An overspend £0.097m relates to top-up funding paid to Shropshire's special schools. 3 Special Schools have received significantly more top-up funding since the start of the academic year
- Expenditure of £6.347m on top-up funding to Shropshire special schools is higher than previously forecast

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

- **High Needs Block**
- **Top Up Funding to Mainstream Schools**
- £0.258m overspend relating to top-up funding paid to mainstream schools where expenditure totalled £5.943m, representing an 18% increase compared to 2022-23.
- An increase in demand for top-up funding in mainstream settings mirrors the national picture. This could be attributed to a growth in new EHC plans and growth in the SEND hubs attached to mainstream schools. This figure includes the Graduation Support Pathway payments as well as top-up funding.
- **SEN Support Services**
- An overspend of £1.610m against this budget totalling £1.898m in 2023-24. The majority of the overspend relates to one-off staffing overspends where additional staff have been employed, sometimes as agency workers to support the wider increase in demand.

Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring

- **High Needs Block**
- The Council's DSG financial position is moving from a cumulative surplus carried forward figure of £2.181m at the start of this financial year to a cumulative deficit of £2.304m at the end of this financial year
- The 2024-25 provisional High Needs Block DSG allocation (before deductions) has been published. Shropshire's allocation is £42.188m representing a 5% increase compared to the 2023-24 allocation of £40.156m. Given that expenditure in 2023-24 on the High Needs Block increased by 26% or £9.048m compared to the 2022-23 figure of £34.854m, it can be seen that future expenditure growth is likely to outstrip future growth in High Needs Block DSG allocations.
- The High Needs Block DSG 3 year forecasting exercise undertaken in early 2023 forecasted that the Council would move to a DSG deficit position due to this shortfall in funding relative to increase in expenditure. There is an ongoing review of this 3 year forecast exercise to assess the extent by which future expenditure is likely to exceed future High Needs Block DSG income. This exercise will explore the plans that can be put in place to mitigate this, and the timescale for delivery of these mitigations.

Presentation

Special School Top Up Bandings 23/24 and 24/25, including an overview of all current High Needs Banding levels (Karen Levell & Stephen Waters)

Purpose and Background

- To inform Schools Forum of the work that has been undertaken to align the top –up banding levels for children and young people with SEN attending Shropshire Special Schools
- Special school places not only offer a lower cost alternative to independent places, but also allow pupils to be educated in their community. It is recognised that special schools are facing significant financial pressure due to increasing numbers of pupils with ever greater levels and complexities of need
- Special schools are funded from the High Needs Block - £10,000 per commissioned place plus a top up for each child placed
- 3 special schools in Shropshire – Severndale (415), Woodlands (82) & Keystone (90 rising to 120)
- Current funding arrangements for Severndale and Woodlands have been in place since 2014. Commissioned Place Funding & Top-up rates remained unchanged
- Different approaches across special schools – Severndale = banded. Woodlands & Keystone single flat rate.

Banding Levels

Severndale – 4 levels

- Band A £1,000
 - Band B £4,314
 - Band C £11,696
 - Band D £18,628
-
- Woodlands & Keystone flat rate £12,585

Severndale

- Concerns raised over insufficient funding to provide specialist provision, including level of staffing required to safely deliver the provision outlined in EHC Plans. Challenges in managing school budgets within the current funding bands
- Agreed action necessary between Local Authority and Trust to work together to ensure school was financially sustainable and able to provide good quality education to the Children and Young people. Two stage process
- Firstly, working through annual review process with each individual pupil to confirm needs and appropriate banding for each CYP using Banding Criteria and back dating resulting banding changes to September 2023
- Secondly review banding rates in line with local/ regional and national benchmarking to ensure school is safe and secure

Severndale Review

- Full audit of school
- Agreed minimum guarantee of staffing to keep school safe
- Findings – too many children on wrong band and value of banding insufficient

Proposed Funding for 2023-24

Row Labels	2324 Numbers	% Split	Current	
			Banding Value	Sum of Banding Value
Band A	0	0%	£1,000	0
Band B	84	21%	£11,696	£982,464
Band C	204.5	50%	£11,696	£2,391,832
Band D	51.5	13%	£18,628	£959,342
Band E	69.5	17%	£25,650	£1,782,675
Grand Total	409.5			£6,116,313
Commissioned	415		£10,000	£4,150,000
TOTAL Top Up & Place				£10,266,313

Woodlands

- Concerns raised over insufficient funding to provide necessary staffing levels for 82 commissioned places and safely increase numbers of students from 60 (September 2023) to 82 (April 2024). Challenge of managing school budgets in single flat rate top –up. Too many students requiring bespoke arrangements leading to lack of stability in staffing arrangements.
- Agreed action necessary between Local Authority and Trust to work together to confirm number of commissioned places at 82 & move from flat rate top – up funding system to a 3 Band model reflective of pupil need.
- Firstly developing banding descriptors for each level. Followed by alignment of pupils to the appropriate bands based on individual need resulting in pupils being placed on one of 3 bands.
- Secondly –providing additional top –ups within the banding – identification of pupils through SEN panel – working closely with Woodlands admissions team

Woodlands Review

Top up funding to be provided on a three band pathway model (further detail of the three band descriptions has been provided)

Banding rates:

- Pathway 1: £12,585 34 students
- Pathway 2: £19,500 24 students
- Pathway 3: £26,000 24 student

Findings – disproportionate level of pupils at Pathway 3



New Shropshire top up banding rates 23/24

Mainstream Schools

Level	Amount per year
Level 1	£1,000
Level 2	£2,000
Level 3	£3,000
Level 4	£4,000
Level 5	£5,000
Level 6	£6,000
Level 7	£7,000
Level 8	£8,000
Level 9	£9,000
Level 10	£10,000
Level 11	£11,000
Level 12	£12,000
Level 13	£13,000
Level 14	£14,000
Level 15	£15,000

(Plus £10,000 place funding)		
SEN Hubs	Top- Up Amount per year	Total Per Pupil Funding (Place and Top-Up)
Level 7	£7,000	£17,000

(Plus £10,000 place funding)		
Special Schools	Amount per year	Total Per Pupil Fun
Severndale		
Band A	£1,000	£11,000
Band B	£4,314	£14,314
Band C	£11,696	£21,696
Band D	£18,628	£28,628
Band E (proposed)	£26,650	£36,650
Woodlands		
Pathway 1	£12,585	£22,585
Pathway 2	£19,500	£29,500
Pathway 3	£26,000	£36,000
Keystone		
Pathway 1	£12,585	£22,585

New top up rates - 24/25

Shropshire top up banding rates and total per pupil funding from September 2024

Mainstream Schools		SEN Hubs	(Plus £10,000 place funding)		Special Schools	(Plus £10,000 place funding)	
Level	Amount per year		Top- Up Amount per year	Total Per Pupil Funding (Place and Top-Up)		Top- Up Amount per year	Total Per Pupil Funding (Place and Top-Up)
Level 1	£1,000	Pathway 1	£7,000	£17,000	Severndale		
Level 2	£2,000				Pathway 1	£12,585	£22,585
Level 3	£3,000				Pathway 2	£19,500	£29,500
Level 4	£4,000				Pathway 3	£28,645	£38,645
Level 5	£5,000				Woodlands		
Level 6	£6,000				Pathway 1	£12,585	£22,585
Level 7	£7,000				Pathway 2	£19,500	£29,500
Level 8	£8,000				Pathway 3	£26,000	£36,000
Level 9	£9,000				Keystone		
Level 10	£10,000				Pathway 1	£12,585	£22,585
Level 11	£11,000						
Level 12	£12,000						
Level 13	£13,000						
Level 14	£14,000						
Level 15	£15,000						

Conclusion

- New banding rates reflective of continuum of provision and level of need
- Impact Forecast overspend on HNB from £4.5m to £6m
- Reduced supply staff – more stability
- Seeing increasing confidence – more capacity to meet needs of complex pupils – reducing reliance on INMSS sector
- Leading to prevention of external placements and increased scope for bringing pupils back

Verbal Update

**Outline of the EHCP Placement process,
including challenges and opportunities of
moving CYP (Karen Levell)**

Paper C

Update on the development of the new SEND Hubs (Andy Nicholls)

Update on the development of new SEND Hubs

To Summarise (as of June 2024):

- 4 new hubs created (Bowbrook, Ellesmere, Whitchurch, Morda)
- 1 Hub expanded (Bridgnorth)
- 50 additional places (up 47%)
- 3 new Education Quality Advisors (SEND and AP) appointed
- Projected 5 year cost reduction to HN budget of £8.5m v's placing in independent.

Next Steps:

- Expand provision further - rebuilds not just refurbishments
- Co-production / collaboration
- Keeping the focus upon local provision where ever possible

Papers D, E and F

**SEND and AP Strategy and Outcomes
Framework (David Shaw)**

Purpose

This strategy sets the direction and commitment from the Area SEND Partnership to develop an inclusive system where everyone can thrive. We are committed to improving outcomes for children and young people aged 0-25 in Shropshire with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those accessing alternative provision (AP). It builds upon the SEND Strategy co-produced with children, young people, families and professionals in 2021, incorporates feedback from the Ofsted/CQC Area SEND re-visit inspection from November 2022, the work completed to date through the Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) and the national SEND and AP Improvement Plan published March 2023.

A wide variety of engagement and development sessions during 2023 included Developing Inclusive Practice days, Headteacher Briefing Sessions, Early Help drop-in sessions, direct feedback from children, young people and families to services, 24 hours of self-evaluation focus group activity and a final self-evaluation session with SEND Partnership Board members in January 2024.

We recognise that many children and young people who access AP will have SEND, and we have therefore included AP within this strategy. Our commitment is to create a well-integrated, complementary and effective SEND and AP system in Shropshire.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or disability that means that they need special education, care and health support.

Alternative Provision (AP)

Alternative provision helps children who need extra help to stay in and enjoy learning at their mainstream school or provides specialist places and support for those who would benefit from spending time away from their mainstream school.

Our priorities

The draft proposed system wide priorities will enable the implementation of our vision and address the themes emerging from our self evaluation;

1. Develop local, high quality, inclusive provision across the system. Including strengthening the graduated response and ordinarily available provision (SOAP) whilst ensuring consistency and effectiveness of the emotional health and mental wellbeing offer in mainstream education settings, across all phases.
2. Enable early identification and the right help at the right time, including reducing waiting times for speech and language therapy and neurodiversity assessments.
3. Enable children and young people to communicate confidently, contribute to decisions, and feel visible and valued members of their community.
4. Develop a proactive, supportive, and clear alternative provision offer.
5. Develop a system that makes sense and works together, improving co-production, communication and engagement with families and professionals from all services. Including Improving the quality and timeliness of EHC plans, annual reviews, and transition pathways.
6. Develop a data informed and intelligence rich approach.
7. Enable children and young people to feel visible and valued members of their community, ensuring they are supported to be as socially and economically independent as possible to achieve their next steps in life.

Priority 1

Develop local, high quality, inclusive provision across the system. Including strengthening the graduated response and ordinarily available provision (SOAP) whilst ensuring consistency and effectiveness of the emotional health and mental wellbeing offer in mainstream education settings, across all phases.

Ambition

We will develop a continuum of high-quality local provision in Shropshire across education, health and social care, to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and those requiring AP.

Delivery

- We will continue to develop a continuum of provision to integrate skills and knowledge between mainstream and special schools, including further development of SEND hubs in mainstream schools. This will include early years, schools and post 16.
- We will focus on building capacity within provisions to strengthen children and young people's participation in decision making. This will involve a focus on supporting mainstream provision to keep children and young people in their local communities through wrap around health and care support.
- We will maximise outreach and community services, such as those from alternative providers, special schools or community organisations, to strengthen our local provision offer.
- We will develop our social prescribing and other community support offers for families to support early identification, inclusion and participation building on the development of the Early Help Hubs across Shropshire. We will build a thriving market for short break provision and encourage the use of personal budgets to support respite opportunities.
- We will establish a multi-agency forum to share best practice around inclusive education, health and care. This will include high quality professional development for staff.
- We will develop the Shropshire Ordinarily Available Provision (SOAP) framework from early years, schools and Post 16 so that all education professionals and families know what will be universally available for children and young people with SEND, wherever you live in Shropshire. This will enable all education providers to play a key role in ensuring all children and young people with SEND are able to access excellent provision delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

Impact

- Most children and young people with SEND will successfully and regularly attend mainstream school. There will be further reduction in persistent/severe absence and a reduction in suspensions and exclusions. Children and young people in need of additional support from AP will be supported in mainstream, or return to and be successful in, mainstream provision.
- Fewer children and young people are placed out of Shropshire for their education placement because their education, health and care needs are met locally.
- There will be an increase in the proportion of providers rated outstanding or retaining good judgements from Ofsted.
- We will ensure specialist and alternative provision is in the right locations, high quality and accessible across Shropshire without long journey times.
- More early years settings, schools and Post 16 providers will have a consistent and effective emotional health and mental wellbeing offer, including a trained Senior Mental Health Lead in their senior leadership teams.
- There will be an improvement in attainment and progress outcomes across all phases, as high-quality teaching, curriculum and inclusion enable children and young people's needs to be met whichever mainstream early years, school or post 16 setting they attend in Shropshire.

Our shared commitment to Young People with SEND

“We want all Shropshire children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life.

We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people.

We want them to thrive and live their best life.”

An **outcomes framework** outlines a range of things that children and young people themselves, families and professionals would like all children in Shropshire to **do**, to **have**, to **feel** and to **achieve**, for them to be living the **best life** they can.

Outcomes framework

There are two important reasons to develop an agreed outcomes framework.

1. We need to measure our performance by focusing clearly on how our work is impacting on outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
2. We need to ensure that we have a framework of consistent, regular measurements that we can apply year on year to see how our impact on children and young people with SEND is changing over time.

Each of the top-level outcomes on the right is broken down to reflect 'what good looks like' in each area, for children and young people, parent carers and professionals.

Wherever possible, we aim to apply a measure to track progress towards these good outcomes.



SEND and AP Strategy and Outcomes Framework

A summary of:

- ***Feedback is welcomed from Schools Forum Members by the 1st July 2024.***
- Feedback is also being gathered from a range of other people and groups, including CYP directly.
- Public consultation on the SEND and AP Strategy and Outcomes Framework is now planned for w/c 8th July and will run for 6 weeks.

Paper G

**Schools Forum Work Programme &
Membership**

(David Shaw)

Schools Forum Work Programme

Meeting	Report
20 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2023-24
12 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Dedicated Schools Grant update 2023-24 Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2024-25 Schools Revenue Funding Update 2025-26 Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2024-25 Updated Dedicated Schools Grant 2024-25 Growth Fund Allocations 2023-24 and 2024-25 Early Years Block Allocations 2023-24 and 2024-25
7 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Retention of Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2025 Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2024-25
5 December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Funding Arrangements 2025-26 Consultation on the Central Retention of Dedicated Schools Grant from April 2025 Central Schools Services Block 2024-25
9 January 2025 (provisional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extraordinary meeting if needed to make decisions on APT submission
23 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Revenue Funding Settlement 2025-26 Shropshire Schools Forum Constitution
20 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2024-25 High Needs Block 3 Year forecasting

Schools Forum future dates

Thursday 12 September 2024	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams
Thursday 7 November 2024	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams
Thursday 5 December 2024	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams
Thursday 9 January 2025 (Provisional)	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams
Thursday 23 January 2025	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams
Thursday 20 March 2025	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams
Thursday 19 June 2025	8.30 – 10.30	Microsoft (MS) Teams



Communications

(Bill Dowell)