

SCHOOLS FORUM

SUBJECT SEND update to include Free special school, SEND capital projects and Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV)

DATE 19th September 2023

REPORT OF Rebecca Taylor, Head of SEND and Inclusion

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT To inform Schools Forum of the key activity and timelines, to support a more sustainable SEND system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Schools Forum:

- Note the current activity taking place to both improve outcomes for children with SEND and the financial pressure on the High Needs Block.
- Schools Forum to support the proposed governance arrangements of the DBV quarterly reporting mechanism.
- Support, where appropriate, in areas that Local Authority Officers are currently finding a challenge.

BACKGROUND

Currently the activity around SEND is to mitigate a £58million predicted overspend on the High Needs Block by 2028.

The key activity can be divided into themes as follows:

- 20 week timeliness key performance indicator being monitored by the DfE.
- SEMH free school awarded by the DfE in March 2023 (National programme)
- SEND sufficiency plans and capital programme of works (Capital grant funding over three years)
- Delivering Better Value in SEND (£1million grant funded 2 year project)
- Other SEND activity

20 week timeliness

The department of Education continue to monitor the timeliness of North East Lincolnshire turning around requests for EHCPs in 20 weeks. There are a number of factors to the current challenge:

- Educational psychology assessments needed for each request received
- Social care contributions on the care section
- Lack of specialist provision and placements for children to attend
- The volume of requests being received

The data is shared below in two formats:

- The calendar year that the DfE monitor the data.

- The academic year that the Local Authority have also recorded it in to identify any patterns or trends.

Department for Education reporting template

Progress Completing New EHC Plans in 20 Weeks, 2022

LA Name:	North East Lincolnshire Council							
	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23
Number of EHC Plans issued, excluding exceptions	17	15	16	20	16	25	20	
Number of these issued in 20 weeks	3	6	4	7	2	2	0	
% in 20 weeks	18%	40%	25%	35%	13%	8%	0%	#DIV/0!
Cumulative % in 20 weeks for 2023	18%	28%	27%	29%	26%	22%	19%	19%
Total number of EHC's issued within 30 weeks	13	11	9	17	9	21	17	
Total number of EHCP's issued within 52 weeks.	27	30	22	21	16	29	20	
Total number not completed and over 30 weeks	25	25	10	2	0	1		
Total number not completed and over 52 weeks	0	1	0	0	0	0		

Academic year 2022-23

Number of EHCAR's received	Total number of EHCP's issued	Total number of EHCP's issued within 20 weeks where no exceptions apply.	Total number of EHCP's issued within 20 weeks including those where an exception applies.	Total number of EHCP's issued exceeding 20 weeks where no exception applies	Total number of EHCP's issued exceeding 20 weeks and an exception applies	Total number of EHCP's issued within 30 weeks	Total number of EHCP's issued within 52 weeks	Number of assessments completed
400	250	31/12%	32 / 13%	169/68%	50 / 20%	132 / 53%	247 / 99%	288

Academic year trends of requests for assessment

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Total
2019-20	28	15	18	21	23	27	27	14	21	25	37	2	258
2020-21	6	9	13	15	20	32	33	11	26	27	41	8	241
2021-22	20	25	26	14	22	22	46	19	40	26	42	12	314
2022-23	22	31	26	27	30	35	43	40	55	36	55		400

Actions taken since January 2023:

- Redirecting work of the Educational Psychology team to focus on statutory work, balancing training demands and commissioned work.
- Designated Social Care Officer came into Post 1st January 2023 – undertaken training and work across Children's Social care to raise awareness and develop understanding.
- Developed the Delivering Better Value grant fund application to focus on inclusivity and how the LA could fund support to help schools strengthen their graduated response. Now in mobilisation phase.
- Worked with people and Culture to explore overseas recruitment. Unfortunately, recruitment cycle in August proved unsuccessful.

- Ongoing work with the teams to refocus EPs and for specialist teachers to support with some of the workload where appropriate and possible.

SEMH Free School

Local Authority officers have been working with central DfE colleagues to prepare the identified land, both in terms of securing a lease from LHP as well as completing required land surveys on the identified site. A range of Local Authority officers met with the DfE at Open Door in June and walked around the proposed school site.

As a result of the work still underway and the assurances provided by the Planning Department at North East Lincs, the build has been moved forwards to a September 2025 opening.

This was determined before the current position the Department for Education faced around the RAAC, as currently meetings about the free school have been halted. It is unknown how long for and the impact this may have on the timeline agreed before the summer break.

Recruitment is underway for a Multi-Academy Trust to sponsor the school, with applications closing on 31st August 2023. This is a central Department for Education process, where the Local Authority have a place on the panel. It is estimated that a Trust will be appointed by January 2024.

SEND sufficiency and Capital programme

The first Resource Specialist provision officially opens on Friday 15th September at Littlecoates Primary Academy, part of Wellspring Academy Trust. This provides 12 places for children with EHCPs aged 4-7. It is only a provision that can accommodate children up to the end of key stage 1, with the vision that the majority of the children who attend the 'Launch Pad' will be able to return to their local mainstream primary school during key stage 1, and at the latest in time to start key stage 2.

The Local Authority are currently working with two other Primary schools and as a result of the Delivering Better Value in SEND launch in July, pending four conversations with other Primary schools during September too.

Primary school A the Local Authority is working with them and in conjunction with the National Autistic Society to create a 'Cullum Centre' these are specialist provisions for children with both an EHCP and a diagnosis of autism. The expectation is that children attend mainstream classes for 70% of the time, and specialist support in an onsite bespoke unit for 30% of their timetable.

Primary school B the Local Authority are working with the setting to establish a provision for up to 30 children with a primary need of SEMH. The setting will hopefully start with a smaller cohort of children (6) from January 2024 to pilot their approach and then grow incrementally over a further 18 month period.

The two new Primary schools being built at Waltham and Scartho will also have 12 place resource specialist provisions integrated as part of the build. The phasing in of these places will align with the phasing in of the main school year groups.

Despite conversations with 4 secondary settings over the last academic year, nothing has progressed further than initial conversations with headteachers and Trusts due to concerns cited by headteachers about:

- The impact on performance data
- The impact on attendance
- The impact on Ofsted inspection judgements
- It not being the right school for SEND provision

There is a conversation pending in September to speak to another Trust and secondary setting who are keen to develop provision on their site. The SEND lead for the Trust has been in touch over the summer following the Delivering Better Value in SEND launch.

Delivering Better Value in SEND

The quarter 2 report is attached for reading. This provides the specific detail about the elements of the project and what we have spent, completed etc. This is a quarterly report that the Local Authority are expected to submit with the agreement of all key stakeholders. The summary of the report is below. The ask of Schools forum members is that each quarter could I arrange a 30 minute max online meeting to go through the report for feedback and challenge.

The project has been mobilising since the grant funding was awarded in March. Aligned to the project plan submitted and approved the Local Authority have undertaken recruitment to provide additional capacity for the duration of the project:

- Project lead
- Schools project officer
- 2 x data analysts for SEND

Procurement and commissioning of contracts has also taken place to facilitate additional services and support during the next academic year.

A launch of the programme took place in July at the Town Hall. Key note speakers included; Rob Walsh, Helen Kenyon and Janice Spencer.

A further schools launch is scheduled for 13th September with the LEARN SEND teaching hub who have been commissioned to provide consultancy support for all mainstream settings in North East Lincolnshire to help them evaluate their SEND provision. The results of this will be received by the Local Authority to help inform future commissioning to support settings on their journey of becoming more inclusive. All evaluations are due to take place this term and completed by the end of January.

A training programme of dates has launched and will continue to be added to. A focus this year is on the writing of SMART targets, so that progress becomes easier to measure on SEND support and Education Health and Care Plans. SENCos and

Designated Children Looked After Teachers will also receive a copy of a text to support them to deliver training on writing SMART targets in their own setting.

This will be a common approach to training over the two year project, to ensure that those attending any of the training provided, have the tools to cascade it effectively into their own setting, thus creating sustainability in areas of the SEND partnership.

Within the data systems workstream, the additional capacity has been supporting a range of activity around the procurement of a new system, to facilitate the requirements across the SEND partnership. This is alongside generating a manual data dashboard that can be updated quarterly, and part of the SEND inspection readiness.

Current challenges/risks:

The timeline around education moving onto a new management information system, has been delayed and will no longer be within the timescales of the DBV project. This is outside of education officers control, and will impact on a longer term sustainable data dashboard before the end of the DBV project.

Speech and language additional capacity has been a challenge to mobilise and contract. Escalation through Children's leadership, SEND exec and colleagues in health continues to take place to ensure that we are able to recruit to and mobilise this part of the project. This is not in place for 1st September as planned and therefore there is slippage in the support being available to support with addressing the current waiting list and delivering training.

Other SEND activity

Outreach targeted support

Springboard outreach team launched on 1st September. This team has been funded using some Early Years Inclusion Fund and High needs block for one academic year. This team will target 30 children aged up to 7 years old with EHCPs in place, or a request for Early Years Inclusion funding. The aim of the team is to model strategies to support children in the setting alongside existing staff who work with the child. The team will provide resources to the setting, some which can be kept, and some which are borrowed in a 'try before you buy' approach. Referrals are being managed by the Early Years Lead and SEND services manager to ensure that those children who are potentially on the cusp of needing specialist provision, may be able to remain in mainstream alongside their peers in their locality to continue to access appropriate education. This approach to support is being carefully monitored to identify if this is an appropriate support mechanism to take forwards after this academic year.