

MINUTES

Title of Meeting:	School's Forum High Needs Group	
Purpose or Mandate:	To oversee the HNB of the DSG	
Date:	Thursday 19 th September 2019	
Place:	F04 First Floor Meeting Room, Constantine House, Ipswich	
Times:	2.00-4.00 pm	
Members:	Izzy Connell (Chair) Gemma Morgan Michael Quinton Alison Bowman Allison Coleman Lawrence Chapman Graham Alcock Calvin Marshall Sally Garrett Darron Jackson Sarah Wood Jamie Mills Ashlee Jacobs Jan Hatchell Jacqui Frost Abbie Thorington Lisa Jones Samantha Porter Helen Murray Neil Winn	Headteacher Specialist Education Services Head of SEND Funding and Provider Services Schools Funding Policy Manager SCC Governor, Earl Soham Primary School Governor, Federation of Fairfield and Colneis Schools CEO SENDAT Headteacher, Hampden House PRU Director of Learning Support, West Suffolk College Headteacher, Ashley School Headteacher, Gorseland Primary School Headteacher, Waldringfield Primary School Provider Development Performance Manager Raedwald Trust Headteacher, Riverwalk School SPHA Ipswich Academy Consortium Multi-Academy Trust Whitehouse Wickham Market Primary Murrayfield Primary
	PLEASE SEND A REP IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND	
Invited Guests:	Joy Settle – LA Consultant (High Needs)	

PART A – contains items that could be disclosed in full to the public and staff

Item No	Estimated Timing	Item Description	Lead Officer
1	2.00- 2.10	<p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <p>New members were welcomed to the group and Izzy explained how her new role meant that she would no longer be working with the group and this was her final meeting.</p> <p>Apologies Alison Bowman; Sally Garrett; Sarah Wood; Jamie Mills; Jacqui Frost; Abbie Thorington</p>	IC

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2	2.10-2.20	Actions from the last meeting. No actions	IC
3	2.20-2.30	Role of Head of SEND Funding and Provider Services Gemma introduced herself and explained her background in finance and Post 16 funding, including links with the EFSA and apprenticeships. Moved to Suffolk in 2016 and took up the new post in July 2019. The wider role includes all aspects of SEND finance, commissioning and contracts and oversight of High Needs Funding. The team consists of two funding technicians and currently Joy is employed as a SEND Consultant to lead on the advice and moderation aspects of HNF.	GM
4 & 5	2.30-3.00	Update on HNF Process from September 2019 and Feedback from Workshops Update given on the key areas of HNF, the development and the processes that have been established for the new academic year. Eight workshops, covering all three localities, will ensure that colleagues in all sectors have up to date information and an overview of how the process has been shaped. The key messages are that the application process has been streamlined, the moderation process has been re-established, the banding descriptors have been redesigned, there has been the introduction of exemplar materials and learners now allocated a band, will retain that band for as long as it remains appropriate. Also, a Quality Assurance system will be established to ensure that funding remains fairly allocated and wisely spent. All colleagues present were thanked for their contributions to this process. Izzy was thanked for all of her hard work in respect of HNF and wished well in her new role. Other points raised were as follows: the value of mainstream colleagues being involved in the in-situ visits to specialist settings to carry out HNF moderation; the issue of electronic documents in PDF – especially EHCPs – and the huge amount of time that would be saved if these documents could be available in Word (Gemma will take this request forward); the importance of a representative from SPHA and SASH to be at every meeting; the issue of statutory arrangements for SSCs – Michael explained that there is no statutory guidance on this – a more robust service level agreement was requested; clarification of the arrangements for HNF and PRU settings – PRUs do not make applications for HNF as they are place funded, however schools are being encouraged to make applications for learners so that needs are recognised and a banding is allocated, even though funding would not be given whilst the learner attended the PRU; similarly there is a relevance to dual placements in specialist settings; what is the national picture with regards to HNF and do pupils have similar bands in other authorities? - all Local Authorities can allocate their HNF however they wish and the banding system that Suffolk operates is not common to all other authorities ; the overall cost of HNF to Suffolk LA and how the costs will be met in the light of an overspend – Gemma explained the various aspects that are being explored for the	IC

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		<p>future to reduce the pressure on the HNF pot via the creation of new provision in Suffolk, the revision of specialist units, the transitional protection system, the analysis that is being carried out to determine whether the amounts for each banding are accurate and the possibility of a request being made to Schools Forum for further funds; the current political intentions to make extra funding available to local authorities; the recently released report from the National Audit Office about the DFE and SEND funding; Notional Funding is still very unclear in school's budgets; joint work with Norfolk and Cambridgeshire is taking place to discuss commissioning arrangements; the link between HNF bandings and the admissions process for specialist settings – some concerns about learners on low bands being placed; do the bandings differ across types of setting?</p> <p>CM raised his concerns about students joining settings in-year and having to wait until the following term to receive bandings and funding for the top-up funding. Due to the nature of the moderation process and the in-situ visits it is difficult to run moderation outside of the cycle as we rely upon an expert panel. GM to add as agenda item at the next meeting to explore further and look at possible flexibilities. This may be a short-term problem as once a CYP receives a band they will keep this for life, unless their setting feels that this needs to be changed.</p>	
6	3.00-3.05	Break	
7	3:05-3:15	<p>Draft Schools Forum Paper – High Needs Block</p> <p>The recent DFE call for evidence was responded to by Suffolk LA and there has been a commitment made by the authority to allocate extra funding to SEND. The predicted overspend for 2020 is £7,000,000. Cabinet will support the plans for new provision and alongside the SEMH school that will open in Ipswich, there is one planned for Bury and there will be additional provision for Communication and Interaction needs. Even so, demand is still outstripping provision and will continue to grow. A number of people raised a concern about the staffing of all of these ventures. It was felt that aspects had not been listened to at recent meetings with the LA colleagues who are responsible for developing this new provision and there is a lack of teaching training for new teachers or established teachers in mainstream settings moving into specialist settings. Discussion then turned to Transitional Protection and Gemma explained how this works and there were examples given of how this has affected different settings. All colleagues from specialist settings wanted to know whether Band 1 students would be included in Transitional Protection and Gemma said that she would investigate this. Concerns were raised about Schools Block being expected to absorb the HNF overspend and the recent paper submitted to Schools Forum was not seen to reflect the most current situation. Gemma will look into this.</p>	GM

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8	3.15-3.35	Review of Banding Descriptors There was a lot of feedback from colleagues at moderation and during the workshops, about the banding descriptors. It was felt that they were too long and not always sequential across the bandings in both language and layout. Joy has worked on these over the summer and transferred them into a more succinct and sequential style. They were then sent out to the members of the group in draft form and comments were invited. The comments that were received prior to the September workshops commencing were acted upon and where possible, all suggestions were included. It was important then to be able to share them at the workshops but it was emphasised that they are a work in progress and may be further adapted in the future. A print-out of the new descriptors was shared.	IC
9	3.35-3.45	Moderation of Band I cases The system for considering Band I cases has been developed over the summer and a decision has been made to incorporate this into the in-situ visits for specialist and FE settings. There are currently no Band I learners in mainstream settings, but should that change, this system will be reviewed. Where a setting is requesting funding at Band I level, a decision will be made at the time of the visit as to whether this is an appropriate request. The setting will then be asked to prepare a report detailing the provision and the costings for those agreed cases and the reports will then be discussed at a SEP meeting. The format for the report will be determined from the examples of good practice that have been established in the last academic year. Colleagues expressed how important it will be for this guidance to be very clear and permission was given for established good practice to be continued.	IC
10	3.45-3.55	AOB <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will continuing learners in FE be taken forward by the LA for automatic payment? All settings must enter their learners on the correct tab on the spreadsheet, including those who already have a band and there is no request for that band to change. 2. Are Family Services teams clear about the HNF bandings? We are working closely with the teams and Tracy is involved in the Band I SEPs. 3. Will learners who are coming into PRUs with high bands have any additional funding? There is no expectation to release funding for learners who are already place funded at a PRU and at their mainstream setting, as this exceeds the level of any funding at Band C to Band H. 4. Will funding for Early Years learners in specialist settings, continue as it has in the past? The practice in the past has been to allocate a notional banding and then assess it once the learner is in the 	ALL

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		<p>setting. This is probably not a very accurate practice and needs to be revised.</p> <p>5. It needs to be determined if Key Stage 1 Specialist Units will include children from EYFS. KS1 and EYFS are different age ranges and each needs to be considered. At the July market engagement events it was suggested that these units may include children from Reception. This needs to be discussed and agreed.</p>	
11	3.55-4.00	<p>Next Meeting</p> <p>3rd December 2pm-4pm – G01 Landmark House</p>	