

MINUTES

Title of Meeting:	School's Forum High Needs Working Group	
Purpose or Mandate:	To oversee the HNB of the DSG	
Date:	Tuesday 31 st March 2020	
Place:	Virtual meeting via Skype	
Times:	1.00-3.00 pm	
Members:	<p>Gemma Morgan (Chair)</p> <p>Michael Quinton</p> <p>Alison Bowman</p> <p>Allison Coleman</p> <p>Lawrence Chapman</p> <p>Graham Alcock</p> <p>Calvin Marshall</p> <p>Sally Garrett</p> <p>Darron Jackson</p> <p>Sarah Wood</p> <p>Jamie Mills</p> <p>Ashlee Jacobs</p> <p>Jan Hatchell</p> <p>Jacqui Frost</p> <p>Abbie Thorrington</p> <p>Lisa Jones</p> <p>Samantha Porter</p> <p>Helen Murray</p> <p>Neil Winn</p> <p>Jacqui Frost</p> <p>Joy Settle</p> <p>Steve Newman</p>	<p>Head of SEND Funding and Provider Services SCC</p> <p>Schools Funding Policy Manager SCC</p> <p>Governor, Earl Soham Primary School</p> <p>Governor, Federation of Fairfield and Colneis Schools</p> <p>CEO SENDAT</p> <p>Headteacher, Chalk Hill PRU</p> <p>Director of Inclusive Learning, West Suffolk College</p> <p>Headteacher, Ashley School</p> <p>Headteacher, Gorseland Primary School</p> <p>Headteacher, Waldringfield Primary School</p> <p>Provider Development Performance Manager SCC</p> <p>Raedwald Trust</p> <p>Headteacher, Riverwalk School</p> <p>SPHA</p> <p>Ipswich Academy</p> <p>Consortium Multi-Academy Trust</p> <p>Whitehouse Community Primary</p> <p>Wickham Market Primary School</p> <p>SPHA</p> <p>LA Consultant (High Needs)</p> <p>High Needs Moderator SCC</p> <p>SEND Policy and Funding Manager SCC</p>
	PLEASE SEND A REP IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND	
Invited Guests:	Anne Humphreys (SPCN)	

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

Item No	Item Description	Lead Officer
2	<p><u>Actions from the last meeting:</u></p> <p>Having access to an EHCP word document is continuing to be reviewed and due to the current Covid-19 lockdown this is speeding up the process to enable professionals to have access to the document.</p> <p>The last PRU Heads meeting was cancelled and it is suspected the next meeting will be a virtual one. GM and JS will dial into this meeting.</p>	GM

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	<p>Dual placements will be discussed at today's meeting.</p> <p>Transitional Protection, GM advised that there will be a change to the way Band I payments are made.</p> <p>GA requested that Hampden House be amended to Chalk Hill in the previous minutes.</p>	
3	<p><u>Dual Placement Policy Workshop:</u></p> <p>The previous Policy around Dual Placements was dated 2015 and there have been some significant changes since then. GM and SN had made some adjustments and were keen to work with the group to ensure a robust Policy is in place in the future. The document had been shared with delegates prior to the meeting and all recognised the challenges reviewing the document virtually. All agreed to walk through the Policy page by page and utilise the comments pane.</p> <p>Page 1 Policy Statement, it was agreed to include the age ranges that this Policy would apply to. The group also felt that it was inappropriate to separate out academic and social progress and instead it should be based upon EHCP outcomes. It was also recognised that consideration should be given towards 14 – 16 link provision between school and FE provision. It was also suggested it would be helpful to outline what situation would begin this process.</p> <p>Page 2 AH requested that the advantages and principles are worded in a more parent carer friendly way. GM asked if this could be explained further and SPCN offered to support the wording. The Policy would also need to include CYP views.</p> <p>In terms of the expectations on Schools and Parent Carers it was agreed that this needs to be very specific and clearly outlines what is expected of each party. The previous Policy used the term “frequently” and the group recognised that clear timeframes should be applied specifically when discussing review periods. Mainstream schools would undertake these half termly however for a Special School this would mean in the region of 40 reviews a term which wouldn't be manageable. All recognised that a minimum of a termly review would be appropriate, but it was flagged up to not use the expression as needed. The group also highlighted that a flow chart would be of value as the group discussed a range of different scenarios which all might require a different process.</p> <p>Considering how this process might begin it was confirmed that a parent would make the request to their mainstream school. For those young people not in education whether educated at home or accessing the Alternative Tuition Service an initial placement would be required in order to access a Dual Placement. It was highlighted though there are several incidences of young people moving into Suffolk from another Authority where they had been accessing a Dual Placement and wish to continue this in Suffolk.</p> <p>If a request is made to a school an EHCP would be started, the EHCP is seen as the beginning point and a Dual Placement would need to be recorded within the Plan. An Annual Review would be called involving the family, school and Family Services. SN would need to liaise with Family Services in order to capture the internal arrangements for this process.</p> <p>The group discussed the merits of a Flowchart to try and walk through the different scenarios that might apply to the process.</p>	

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	<p>The Policy currently has a focus on the set up and maintenance of a Dual Placement, but the group felt that it should also describe how a placement could return to being on roll at a single setting. Equally the Policy should also highlight eventualities when the Dual Placement isn't successful and what steps should be taken to remedy this. The group recognised that the Annual Review would be crucial in addressing any shortcomings and considering what steps to take next.</p> <p>The group also highlighted how challenge would be applied in the event a party may not be adhering to the agreement. It was felt that currently any challenge raised is a little toothless without a solid agreement in place outlining the responsibilities and expectations of each party. It was highlighted that a Parent Carers voice was also needed. Given that Parent Carers are taking the children to school every day they will be the point of focus.</p> <p>Page 3 – For the sections around Early Years SN should look for input from Christina Lewis the Head of Early Years and Childcare Service.</p> <p>The group discussed why dual registered children are on the roll of a Special School. It was flagged though if the School is named in the EHC plan the Special School will be named as the main school. The funding agreement was also highlighted as within a mainstream setting the £10,000 placement funding is used differently compared to Special Schools. The group reflected whether it might be necessary to adopt two models with one focusing on placing from a Mainstream to a Special School and then the other way. Should there be two policies or different flowcharts for one policy? It is important we identify the various pathways and then split the policy to reflect the different approaches.</p> <p>Page 4 – Under the 3rd point there is a reference to transport and attendance. It was felt reference needed to be removed and we should be more specific.</p> <p>Looking at the Guest descriptor – the group were asked whether the current wording was appropriate.</p> <p>Registering Coding seemed to be ok and the group moved onto the finance section within the policy. Given developments with the new banding system this required some work. It was flagged up as Special Schools don't support young people below a Band F then perhaps, we should use Band F as an example rather than the Band D. It was highlighted that Mainstream Schools won't access the funding if the student isn't on the School's census.</p> <p>The group felt that another finance example may be needed to reflect the mainstream perspective considering AWPU, Pupil Premium and Top Up funds. It was questioned whether the £6,000 notional monies should be factored into this as well. MQ and GM will explore this.</p> <p>Recognition at the point of placement that the special schools are funding the cost of the placement and if they are expected to also passport funding to the mainstream school this wouldn't be cost effective</p> <p>The Section around Nursery and Early Years would again require a contribution from Christina Lewis.</p>	

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	<p>Transport – It was recognised that the nearest School isn't always the best school for a pupil and the group discussed the appeal process associated with Transport. There is a challenge to ensure that the Dual Placement Policy doesn't conflict with Suffolk's own Transport Policy. The group felt that Transport issues did need talking through, but this would need to come from an external body such as SPCN, it was asked whether this could be aired at School's Forum. However, School's Forum don't have a say in transport costs as this is not part of their financial remit. GA highlighted he would be keen to be involved in any discussions around transport as this effects PRU's as well.</p> <p>On section 4 the Main School should be sharing qualifications.</p> <p>It was questioned whether two lots of equipment should be needed for a Dual Placement. Some items are provided by Health, but we can't expect a school who isn't receiving funding to purchase specialist equipment as well. This requires some work and SN and GM will need to review this.</p> <p>Action: Apply the adjustments detailed in the text above</p>	<p>SN & GM</p>
4.	<p><u>High Needs Moderation:</u></p> <p>Spring term mainstream moderation is now complete with e-mails advising the outcomes due to go out this week. This term saw 260 new cases with 118 changes of band. The new requests totalled £1.2 Million increasing the Mainstream banding claims to £9.7 Million. Of the new claims however 49 cases were not moderated as there was no evidence submitted, the request was later withdrawn, or the request was for a reduction in funding. Of the 378 moderated bands only 59% of these were at the agreed at the requested level the remainder were moderated at a lower band than requested. The moderation process itself saved £283,000 and there was a further £200,000 saving from pupils who had moved out of Suffolk or to an unknown destination or a non HNF setting. With these adjustments the overall mainstream costs are £9.217 Million per annum or £3,070,000 per term.</p> <p>In Special Schools we saw 8 new cases and 26 requests for a change of band. Of these 26 cases 9 were for a Band I. There were 7 leavers sadly including one death. The moderation for the Special Schools is ongoing as is the work on Further Education settings. In FE there were 12 new cases and 3 changes to a band with 23 leavers. There was a worrying trend around what prompted many of these leavers which were a consequence of mental health difficulties.</p> <p>The process has helped identify Schools that might need support with their submissions and Joy was able to visit three schools, one in each of the localities. The visits consisted of giving feedback from previous moderation, discussions around exemplars and observations of HNF learners in their settings. There was also an opportunity to meet with other school staff including finance managers. It is hoped to upload details for colleagues with a Finance perspective as much of the current material is for SENDCos. The group discussed the value of future workshops to share good practice and offer tips to complete the necessary paperwork. It was also highlighted how it would be beneficial to invite more colleagues to take part in the moderation</p>	

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	<p>process itself.</p> <p>In terms of challenge one key area has been around pupils on part time timetables, there were a number of students on reduced timetables in the Autumn Term and the intention is if no progress is made in reintegrating the pupils then later term payments would be adjusted.</p> <p>Another challenging aspect surrounds alternative provision. Some settings are paying for this service direct whereas the Authority is paying for others. It is important the Schools are clear about how this support is being funded as if this is already being funded by the Authority there would be no HNF as this is already being offered.</p> <p>Gemma advised that Joy has now been appointed on a full-time basis and this was welcomed by the group. Joy will work with Steve on the administration of the process and continue to develop systems as well as offer guidance to all relevant colleagues.</p>	
	<p><u>DSG Recovery Plan:</u></p> <p>This year the budget is in deficit by £10 Million although the Department of Education aren't requesting, we report on the overspend we still need to apply a plan to recover this position.</p> <p>In the High Needs Block there has been a significant increase on the spend across mainstream settings. MQ shared a comparison between 2017 – 2018 where 2,025 pupils received a band at a total of £4.2 Million against 2019 – 2020 with the new Banding structure. Although there had been a small increase in pupils at 2,485 the spend had increased to £8.5 million.</p> <p>MQ highlighted that Suffolk will receive additional funding in the new financial year but this would simply go some way to cover an overspend. The Local Authority faces a challenge around dealing with these financial pressures and it was hoped this forum could continue to discuss practical approaches to consider how best to address an increase in demand on services and limited funding.</p>	GM & MQ
	<p><u>Band I Transition</u></p> <p>GM recognised that the Transitional Protection that had been applied on Band I cases had left Special Schools struggling to bridge the gap in costs. To address this GM has given approval to adjust the protection levels on Band I cases. The new rates will be at 65% in year 1, 70% in year 2, 75% in year 3 and 85% in year 4. Gemma suggested should there be any individual questions on this matter to contact her afterwards.</p> <p>The group discussed how best to review Band I children as well. Whether this should be considered through an Annual Review Process rather than through moderation. It was felt that this level of Banding would apply Annually, and this issue was raised at the Special Heads meeting. GM advised she would get some clarity on this point and liaise with Joy around a Band I review mechanism. It was also highlighted that some degenerative needs will impact budgets immediately and this can be difficult to wait for termly funding to be released. For these exceptional cases it might be these need to be looked at separately. GM and JS to discuss.</p>	

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	Actions: Consider a Band I review mechanism considering exceptional cases.	GM
	<u>A.O.B</u> In terms of the group working through the Dual Placement Policy SharePoint had been used in other forums to enable groups to apply commentary on documents. SN to explore how we can share the document.	
	High Needs Working Group Future Meeting Dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5th May 2020 – T04 Landmark House Cancelled ▪ 16th June 2020 – T04 Landmark House ▪ 10th Sept 2020 – Endeavour House ▪ 5th Nov 2020 - G01 Landmark House Venues to be confirmed pending lockdown arrangements.	Schools Forum Dates: <p>Thurs 18th June 2020</p> <p>Thurs 8th Oct 2020</p> <p>Thurs 26th Nov 2020</p>