

Hello everyone. Please see below the update following our School Liaison Group meeting with officers on Wednesday 25th April 2018. This meeting was focused on just a few key issues, so watch out for a further update in July. If you have any queries related to any of these items (or indeed any other issue you would like to raise), please contact your local SLG rep using the contact details at the end of this article.

1. SEND work threads:

- a. NYCC have been granted **specialist provision capital funding of circa £500k** over 3 years. In year one, the intention is to build some capacity and improve facilities at **Springhead School, Scarborough** as well as facilities (and possibly capacity) at **Springwater in Harrogate**. Feasibility studies will also be undertaken for year 2 and 3 works looking at possible capacity increases at **The Dales** and **Forest**. Works will require additional capital to be secured. Commissioning of additional places will commence from September 2019.
- b. As part of the strategic plan for SEND, NYCC is looking at bidding alongside neighbouring authorities, to the DfE as part of a new **Free School** wave. It is anticipated that bids will be taken during the summer. The plan is to bid for a new special school to serve Selby and its environs.
- c. The LA are also bidding for innovation funding to work with youngsters **at risk of exclusion** and provide routes through to sustainable employment.
- d. There is a plan to gradually **'re-shape' alternative provision** such as it has capacity for pupils at risk of exclusion rather than once permanently excluded. Related to this, from this September a small number of places will be commissioned at **PRS units for pupils on EHCP for SEMH**, but not excluded, who can benefit from the bespoke, alternative provision the PRS offers. Potentially there could be 31 such places available across NYCC The final proposals for the **Strategic Plan** are being refined. Formal consultation will begin THIS term, with meetings for schools held in localities – please do try and engage with this final round of meetings as it will shape the future development of SEND for some years to come. The plan will have two strategic phases: phase 1 are actions which can be delivered with existing funding; phase 2 requiring new funding. Over time the strategic plan does aim to **address the sizeable overspend on SEND** within NYCC (and most other authorities).

Whilst the plan is in development, there are also **national calls for evidence** in several areas of SEND alongside exclusion and elective home education, with ISOS being commissioned by the Local Government Association to scrutinise SEND. It is important that evidence from such reviews is build into the plan as it evolves.

Amongst anticipated proposals, it is suggested within the plan that **EMS provision** will focus more on in-reach models and may be widened to include more schools; decision making should become decentralised with **locality based Steering Groups** including school leaders and LA staff which will be accountable for area funding and implementation – these groups will then link in to a county wide Strategy Group.

It is anticipated that **Early Years interventions** will be part of phase 2 strategy, impacting early with pupils to save on some more costly intervention later in a student's educational career.

Within the plan, the current **Resource Allocation System (Can-Do)** is under close scrutiny, with a likely move to a banding/matrix system, encouraging face to face discussion and real understanding of individual need in order to allocate resource. This is being considered for an April 2019 implementation.

- e. From September 2018 a **pilot short-term funding initiative** is being rolled out. Watch out for communications with this regard. The target pupils will be those with additional need, currently at SEND support, who are from **military families**, are anticipated to struggle at transition or are struggling due to an unforeseen circumstance. Up to £3k of funding could be drawn down by the school attached to a robust SEND Support Plan, where it is anticipated that a short-term strategy could meet the pupil's needs.
- f. Within our meeting we also raised the issue some schools have reported, whereby Headteachers are copied in to **letters sent to parents by practitioners and consultants** suggesting pupils are unable to access school medically, requesting assessment by Educational Psychologists, etc. NYCC are intending to hold meetings with clusters of GPs to tighten up their understanding of roles, responsibilities and procedures. Once local

SEND Steering Groups are in place, it is anticipated that health representation on the panels will be a pre-requisite.

In the meantime, should you be in receipt of a letter from a health agency similar to those cited above, please **scan and send it through to NYCC** both for advice and also to help better describe the range of issues coming in to schools.

Please send letters to Carol-Ann.howe@northyorks.gov.uk

We will follow up on all of the SEND work threads in our June meeting, as one of this year's (and probably next too!) key themes.

2. **Prevention and Early Help:**

Stuart introduced this aspect of discussion. Under '**Working Together,**' schools and other agencies are bound to work closely. However a recent inspection of mental health services suggested that parents have concerned about being passed around the system. Also it has been identified that Early Help can be better coordinated to maximise impact. A review has been commissioned by the Safeguarding Board alongside the Childrens Trust for North Yorkshire, which will include looking at practise within other authorities around coordinated assessment, deployment and support for schools. The aim is to ensure that support is provided as soon as issues emerge, that needs are effectively assessed and that targeted local support is provided for children and families to significantly improve outcomes.

Through the review of services, the intention will be to provide **faster, more responsive support:**

- a. further build on the success of the Prevention Service
- b. consider the Prevention Service focusing more on higher need such as to reduce escalation to statutory services
- c. develop further support for schools through exploring a dedicated consultancy which provides advice, training and access to information – in effect continuing to upskill the school-based workforce to engage with some lower-level concern before referral
- d. strengthen local joined-up working
- e. have an identified Lead Practitioner role in place, which families have some 'control' over
- f. develop a new assessment tool focused on the Signs of Safety approach, which is simple and effective to use (as contained in universal referral form)

Officers have already begun some **informal consultation** research work, with formal strategy being published for consultation later this term.

Whilst discussing Prevention, we requested **clarity for schools around processes, percentages, responsibilities** etc with regard pupil absence (other than holiday Penalty Notices). We would aim to come back to this discussion in our June meeting – watch this space!

3. **Director's update:**

Through his Director's Update, Stuart discussed with the group the considerable funding pressures which the LA is operating against. These include:

- a. **High Needs Block:** whilst an additional £1.6m of funding has been allocated this financial year through the 0.5% contribution from the schools block, there will still be a projected £2.4m overspend, linked to rising need, increased numbers of EHCPs, increasing exclusions. The SEND Strategic Plan is a vital strategy to begin to control the over-spend, to ensure local, less costly provision is in place and effective
- b. **School funding:** whilst NFF delivers better than first thought, the number of schools both in and projecting a deficit is increasing. Neither schools nor the Local Authority have reserves to protect against this. Fair funding for schools is a headline issue within which the local authority and elected members will continue to lobby.

- c. **School transport:** schools will be aware of the consultation with regard SEND transport. School transport more generally is a significant proportion of the authority budget and whilst rurality of course means that some higher costs are unavoidable, linking this to school funding more generally exacerbates the issue.

4. Assistant Director, Education and Skills:

At our meeting we thanked Paul Brennan, as outgoing Assistant Director, for his energy, enthusiasm and commitment over the past few years. We welcomed **Judith Kirk as incoming AD**, who brings with her considerable experience including a passion for partnership working such as the School Liaison Group.

5. Fixed Meal Pricing – catering arrangements:

Without wanting to write a huge piece about FMP in this update, final FMP calculations should be available from Friday 11th May 2018. These are to impact with effect from 1st September this year. we would encourage ALL schools to ensure they spend some time looking at the impact of FMP on their budget and ensure they are clear as to how to mitigate this. NYES Relationship Managers should be your first port of call.

6. Core Group meetings:

A few schools have reported concern at being asked to attend Core Group Meetings etc hosted at family homes. We are aware that NAHT advice is that **HTs should not attend in these circumstances** and should instead request meetings are hosted at schools or at a ‘neutral’ venue.

We are always interested in your thoughts, comments, compliments and issues – what is going well, what is causing you concern, how can we help? Our remaining meeting date for 2017-2018 is: 27th June 2018

Current JDP/SPG area contacts:

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Please do contact us, if you would like to raise queries, concerns or issues for us to discuss or indeed pass on compliments or ideas for improvement. Reps are always happy to liaise via telephone or e-mail and will try and visit your cluster meetings if you would like us to do this. Comment can always be sent through to Ian Yapp, SLG Spokesperson via headteacher@riverside.n-yorks.sch.uk