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## **Schools Forum – 20 June 2023**

### **Report of the Director of Children’s Services**

### **Delivering Best Value (DBV) in SEND Update**

#### **Purpose**

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update on the Delivering Best Value in SEND programme in Dudley.

#### **Recommendations**

2. That Schools Forum:
  - Note the content of the DBV Update Report;

#### **Background**

3. In 2022 Dudley was identified as 1 of 55 Local Authorities with a significant overspend of its High Needs Block and was invited to engage with Round One of the national Delivering Best Value in SEND programme, given that High Needs Block (HNB), spending has been increasing by 9% annually over the last 5 years
  - Mainstream = 36% of total – 7% annual growth
  - INMSS = 21% of total - 21% annual growth
  - Post 16 = 11% of total – 17% annual growth.

NB: 32% of total (made up of Resource Base, AP, Therapy Services, Other Support, etc.)

4. During the latter part of 2022, Newton Europe, commissioned directly via the Department for Education (DfE), undertook a deep dive analysis into Dudley's data to understand the local system and understand the impact on High Needs Block spend.
5. Throughout the modules undertaken as part of the DBV programme initiated by DFE, 3 key areas were identified that are putting increasing pressure on the High Needs block. These being:
  - Increasing demand for specialist education provision (annual increase 23%)
  - Increasing demand for new EHCPs (over 20% per year, is now in line with National at 10% per year)
  - Increasing demand in EHCPs for YP aged between 19 and 25 (annual increase 25% and reduced capacity to end EHCPs for YP aged 19 to 25)
6. In responding to these areas key workstreams were established to respond to the Newton Europe findings, these being:
  1. Sufficient cost effective local provision
  2. Earlier identification and intervention so that SEN is appropriately met at SEN Support
  3. Commissioning of cost effective and appropriate provision to support transition into adulthood

**Activity to date**

7. Table one details activity that has been undertaken (some of which was planned prior to the Newton Europe diagnostic activity) within each key workstream.

**Table 1 – DBV Development Activity**

<b>Workstream 1 – Sufficient cost-effective local provision</b>	
<b>Activity to Date</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>

<p>Extension of current base provision to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support children able to access a mainstream curriculum but who require enhanced support to access mainstream environment</li> <li>• Provide positive opportunities for children struggling to access mainstream curriculum but who will benefit from the mainstream environment</li> </ul> <p>Restructure of Specialist Early Years Service to Integrated Early Years Service</p> <p>Review of health notification system</p> <p>Development of Pens Meadow School planned opening date Sept 24</p> <p>Targeted review of capacity with current specialist settings undertaken by external provider</p>	<p>Discussions with Dudley maintained special schools to ensure that there is capacity for 23/24 cohort this has been enabled by ensuring that requests for EHC needs assessment for children with complex needs have been received without unnecessary delay.</p> <p>5 and 10 year sufficiency strategy to be developed so that we are in a better position to plan effectively into the future.</p> <p>Enhance our MI and data capability to have clear understanding and oversight of future demand alongside in-depth understanding of need and so that we can develop capacity locally based on agreed priorities across all partners</p>
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**Workstream 2– Earlier identification and intervention so that SEN is appropriately met at SEN Support**

<b>Activity to Date</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<p>Children’s Services Redesign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1 (started) includes development of Family Safeguarding model and Family Hubs development, designed to provide high quality support as early as possible. Phase 2 (Autumn 2023) will include Education Services and SEND services,</li> </ul>	<p>Review of specialist education services alongside review of jointly commissioned services including what we commission and impact</p>

<p>and will enable specialist education services to provide early support to schools and will support schools to provide earlier support to children</p> <p>SEND lead practitioner role in post</p> <p>Development of localised assessment centres starting</p> <p>Robust panel processes to support multi agency decision making and to provide intelligence to better understand how SEN Support is being delivered within mainstream schools</p>	<p>SEND monitoring to be established across the borough</p> <p>Transition to school: Plans progressing to introduce targeted training, support and transition funding for children due to start mainstream schools as part of the Integrated Early Years Service</p> <p>Improved phase transition support</p>
<p><b>Workstream 3– Commissioning of cost effective and appropriate provision to support transition into adulthood</b></p>	
<p><b>Activity to Date</b></p>	<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>
<p>Preparation For Adulthood (PFA) strategy in place.</p> <p>Review of local provision, working practice and commissioning including personalised commissioning</p> <p>Improved communication across the partnership</p> <p>DSCO role appointed and in place and will support stronger pathways for children/YP</p> <p>Transition annual reviews to inform and be informed by annual health checks</p> <p>Review of EHCP outcomes to support PFA</p>	<p>Joint commissioning of social care services</p> <p>Multi agency events, in conjunction with parent carers and young people</p>

Deep dive activity into EHCPs has identified that EHCPs are for this age group are not appropriate	
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8. As part of our continuing engagement with the DfE, we have secured grant funding of £1m to support the ongoing development and initial delivery of the DVB programme outcomes.
9. We are currently in the process of securing a delivery partner to work with us in moving this activity forward (this may include Newton Europe although we are also seeking delivery support propositions from other similar agencies)

## **Finance**

10. Grant funding of £1m from DfE will support the ongoing development and initial delivery of the DVB programme outcomes. Base budgets within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (High Needs Block) and capital funding approved within the local authority's capital programme will also support ongoing activities as detailed above which will seek to achieve required efficiencies. As at the end of the financial year 2022/23, the local authority has a deficit balance on the DSG (High Needs Block) of £26.676m. The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme aims to bring under control and reverse this increasing deficit, which can, until the end of the 2025/26 financial year, continue to be held in an unusable reserve and carried forward as a deficit on the local authority's DSG balance.

## **Law**

11. The Schools Forum is a statutory decision making and consultative body constituted in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and its associated regulations, including the Schools Forum (England) Regulations 2012, to enable members of the local school community to work in partnership with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council when making decisions about school funding and finances. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2022.

## **Risk Management**

12. There are no material risks to the Council's Risk Management Framework resulting from the contents of this report.

## **Equality Impact**

13. This report has no direct implications for the Council's commitment to equality and diversity.

## **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

14. This report has no direct implications for human resources, organisational development or service transformation.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

15. There is no impact on the potential to commercially trade and no impact on our customer base.

## **Environment / Climate Change**

16. This report has no direct implications on the environment or the Council's work in addressing Climate and achieving Net Zero target by 2041.

## **Council Priorities and Projects**

17. The 2022/2025 Council Plan is clear in its ambitions for educational outcomes including raising skills, educational and work potential, increasing good or better schools and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This report relates to the use of the Dedicated Schools Grant (HNB) funding to support the educational outcomes of children and young people in the borough.

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**Catherine Driscoll**  
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