

## **Schools Forum 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2024**

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

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

##### **Purpose**

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

##### **Recommendations**

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

##### **Background**

3. Dudley is now eight months into the DBV programme for Workstream 1 (Redesign of our Specialist Services and OAIP Offer) and Workstream 2 (Developing and Delivering our Sufficiency Strategy), while Workstream 3 (Post 16 & Post 19, Preparing for Adulthood) is five months in.

In May, we met with our DfE colleagues, who remain impressed by the pace of activity and the emerging impacts of our work and partnerships. These efforts aim to improve outcomes for children with SEND while addressing financial challenges and pressures within the system and our High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

##### **Activity since Feb 2024: Key Developments**

#### 4. **Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAIP offer**

Workstream 1, is progressing well with focus on restructuring staff and service delivery to improve accessibility and support in mainstream schools.

We are pleased to report that we have concluded the identification of service gaps within our specialist services. This comprehensive assessment has provided an insight into the areas needing improvement. In addition, the four-week consultation period to support the necessary staff structural changes is now complete. This process aligns with our overarching goal of enhancing both the structural framework and the delivery model of our Specialist Inclusion Service, now known as 'CIPS' (Communication & Interaction, Physical & Sensory Advisory Service).

Following the gap assessment, we have commenced the redesign phase, targeting areas identified for improvement. Beginning with streamlining the referral pathway into the service, a key challenge highlighted by schools and stakeholders, and we are committed to making the process smoother and more efficient. This redesign work will continue over the coming months, with a detailed implementation plan in line for development. This plan will encompass all the necessary adjustments, documents, and internal processes, leading up to the planned go-live date in September 2024. This will help us make sure that our changes are making a real difference for children and families.

#### **OAIP (Ordinarily Available Inclusion Provision, sub-workstream 1.2)**

Good progress has been made in developing an inclusive framework for SEND support, now named OAIP (Ordinarily Available Inclusion Provision). Key milestones have been reached, including a draft of the framework. Moving forward, we will focus on obtaining feedback and approval, planning the framework's rollout, providing training, and conducting baseline assessments.

#### **Coproduction (sub workstream 1.1)**

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote coproduction approximately 90 nursery, primary and secondary settings registered to take part in the Four Cornerstones training in March and April. To further strengthen our partnerships, we are working closely with the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and our communications team to finalise

Dudley's 'Co-Pro Charter. The charter aligns with the four cornerstones framework and aims to articulate our collective vision while promoting trust, effective communication, and a culture that values diverse perspectives and contributions across the SEND partnership. In addition, we have co-developed a draft 'Protocol and Success Measures' framework to measure the effectiveness of coproduction. These tools will help us assess our engagement with schools, parent carers, and partners.

Moving forward, our primary focus will be on conducting sessions to introduce the charter and the success measures framework. These sessions will aim to ensure that schools and all stakeholders understand its purpose and key components.

### **Supporting Schools to Build Capacity (sub-workstream 1.5)**

We have identified training opportunities to meet the needs evaluated in schools. To ensure these opportunities are appropriate, certain projects will be trialled with interested schools, and feedback will be evaluated before expanding to more settings. The schools will be identified during the next half term, with training beginning in September. Additionally, some bespoke training opportunities, such as Makaton, are being rolled out to schools as they become available.

### **Workstream 2 - Developing and delivering our Sufficiency Strategy.**

We are pleased to report we have commissioned the third-party supplier 1st Planner to support Dudley in developing our SEND & AP Sufficiency Strategy. The planning and preparation work for this is now fully underway. Multiple schools and stakeholders have shown interest in forming part of this workstream, and the workshops to develop the strategy are now underway.

We are currently awaiting confirmation from the Regional Schools Commissioner on their agreement for three schools to open bases within their settings. Woodside Primary School and Priory Primary School were chosen by our multiagency panels to host 12 place Send Units and Ellowes Secondary School was chosen to host an SEMH Base. These bases are planned to open in January 2025 once approval is granted. The Crestwood Base for young people with SEND related social and emotional needs and anxiety is due to open its door to students in September.

There is an agreement for four more bases within the next two years, this work will be integrated into the sufficiency strategy development work within Workstream 2.

All 5 of Dudley early years inclusion hubs are now operational offering places for children in their earliest years who have been identified with a special educational need. The hubs, based within mainstream schools offer 44 early interventions spaces for nursery children across the Dudley borough delivering personalised, targeted and specialist interventions for children and families. Children are in attendance in all 5 Hubs currently. The Early Inclusion Hubs Leadership Forum has commenced with all 5 Hub Leads attending, sharing best practice, and learning that can be disseminated. In addition, children (for the 2nd cohort) have been identified through robust APDR (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) for placement in the new academic year.

### **Workstream 3 – Preparation for Adulthood**

For Workstream 3, we are focused on commencing the important work to prepare young people for adulthood beyond the age of 16. We have started this process with engaging with stakeholders, including college leaders to understand the current pathways for post-16 preparation for adulthood (PfA). Our discussions aim to identify available internship programs and address challenges faced by young people, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Over the coming weeks we will also be engaging with our wider stakeholders to ensure we are embracing a joined-up approach to ensure all young people receive the support they need for a successful transition into adulthood.

Close collaborative working is underway with colleagues in Dudley Adult Social Care who are leading on the Post 19 PfA to ensure seamless integration. Our aim is to thoroughly consider any overlaps.

#### **Implementing Independent Travel Training (sub-workstream 3.5)**

As of March, work has now commenced for this sub-workstream. We are reviewing historical work carried out and a project plan is in development. Recruitment is underway for a Travel Training coordinator to lead on the training.

## **Workstream 4 – Redesigning our Spend Profile**

Whilst not part of the formal agreement with the DfE, this workstream is a vital component that forms the foundation for all other DBV work being undertaken. Its primary objective is to optimise our spending by identifying Post 16 EHCPs suitable for cessation and improving the timeliness of annual reviews.

In terms of progress, between Jan 23' to Jan 24' cessations increased by 68%, from 163 (2023) to 274 (2024). However, while there was a 14.6% increase in total value, the average value of ceased EHCPs decreased from £6,704 to £4,573.

Table 1 below shows the programme plan of Workstream activities for the period from April 2024 to June 2024, providing a high-level overview of the next steps for each workstream within the programme. A more detailed breakdown of activities is shared by workstream leads within each of the stakeholder working groups.

Table 1. Programme Plan of Workstream Activities for April 2024 to June 2024

<b>Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAIP offer.</b>					
	Next Steps (Between Apr to Jun 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p><b>1.1 Commissioning of Genuine Partnerships</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Foster collaborative partnerships to enhance stakeholder engagement, leverage external resources, and promote co-production values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the success measures and Dudley Co-Pro Charter with stakeholders, partners &amp; schools.</li> <li>• Undertake prep-work for online sessions to explain framework purpose &amp; key components.</li> <li>• Co-develop partnership agreements and monitor their contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced collaboration with external partners</li> <li>• Improved stakeholder engagement- Strengthened co-production values</li> </ul>	On Track		
<p><b>1.2 Reframing our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) Offer</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> An inclusive framework for improved access and effectiveness while setting clear expectations for schools and settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain DLT approval of final version of OAIP framework.</li> <li>• Planning and preparation for the rollout of the OAIP.</li> <li>• Continue with baseline assessments on EHCP requests and other relevant metrics before, during and after implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear expectations for OAP in schools and settings</li> <li>• Enhanced provision of support, resources, and services</li> </ul>	On Track		
<p><b>1.3 Redesigning our Specialist Services Delivery Models</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Adopt an outward-facing approach to foster greater school support, confidence, and in-house capacity for children with SEND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service redesign sub-groups to be developed for further integration and alignment of service delivery for both Communication &amp; Interaction and Physical &amp; Sensory services.</li> <li>• Develop task &amp; finish sub-group to undertake the development of the internal staff training schedule for capacity building following restructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved support and confidence in schools</li> <li>• Enhanced in-house capacity to meet children's needs</li> </ul>	On Track		
<p><b>1.4 Supporting Schools to Build Capacity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review training to be undertaken.</li> <li>• Identify settings as training pilots.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved capacity of mainstream schools</li> <li>• Enhanced support for children without EHCPs</li> </ul>	Monitor		

Workstream 1 - Redesigning our specialist services and OAIP offer.					
	Next Steps (Between Apr to Jun 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p><b>Purpose:</b> Identify training needs, develop tailored materials, and equip mainstream settings to support children without EHCPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission training providers (where required)</li> </ul>				

Workstream 2 - Developing and delivering our sufficiency strategy.					
	Next Steps (Between Apr to Jun 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
<p>2.1 Developing and Implementing Sufficiency Plan</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To create a comprehensive plan that ensures there are adequate services and resources to meet the current and future needs of children and young people with SEND in Dudley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage key stakeholders for strategy development and undertake series of workshops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved service adequacy and resource allocation</li> <li>Enhanced understanding of children's needs and capacity gaps.</li> </ul>	Monitor		
<p>2.2 Implementation of Resource Bases/SEND Units &amp; 2.3 Commissioning of Resource Bases/SEND Units for 2024</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To establish and operate Resource Bases and SEND Units to provide specialised educational support and services for children and young people with SEND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to the two new resource base schools to ensure a seamless set-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of resource bases and SEND units.</li> <li>Integration with mainstream schools</li> <li>Expansion of resource bases</li> </ul>	On Track		
<p>2.4 Commissioning &amp; Implementation of Early Years Inclusion Hubs</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> To ensure the smooth implementation and operation of the Early Years Inclusion Hubs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake planning and prep work for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort (sept 2024)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment &amp; rollout of Early Years Inclusion Hubs</li> </ul>	On Track		

Workstream 3 – Preparation for Adulthood					
	Next Steps (Between Apr to Jun 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
3.1 Develop the Post 16 and Post 19 PFA Pathway  <b>Purpose:</b> Create a clear transition pathway for young people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake planning and preparation for effective pathway mapping.</li> <li>Conduct a survey of current education providers regarding curriculum provision.</li> <li>Engagement with broader stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowering smooth transition for young people and preparing them for adulthood</li> </ul>	Monitor		
3.2 Development of Apprenticeships and Supported Internships  <b>Purpose:</b> Create Apprenticeship and Supported Internships opportunities for Young People with SEND in Dudley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish communication channels and partnerships with the local Employment &amp; Skills Board</li> <li>Create a comprehensive list of training and apprenticeship providers across the borough.</li> <li>Evaluate the current availability and demand for supported internships and apprenticeships within the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling pathways to employment for young people</li> </ul>	Monitor		
3.3 Implement Independent Travel Training  <b>Purpose:</b> Empower young people with disabilities travel skills for independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop project and implementation plan.</li> <li>Develop travel training curriculum.</li> <li>Establish training partner and /or coordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing mobility and independence of young people</li> </ul>	Monitor		

Workstream 4 – Redesigning our Spend Profile					
	Next Steps (Between Apr to Jun 2024)	Impact	RAG Status		
			On track	Monitor	At Risk
4.1 EHCP Cessations – Post 16  <b>Purpose:</b> Improve the annual review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to identify and prioritise Year 11 EHCPs to be targeted for cessation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driving down costs</li> </ul>	Monitor		



### **Finance**

5. Grant funding of £1m from DfE supports the ongoing development and initial delivery of the Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme outcomes during 2023/24 and 2024/25. 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 2023/24, the local authority had a (provisional) deficit balance on the DSG (High Needs Block) of £33.5m with a current budgeted deficit for 2024/25 of £36.1m. The 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**

6. 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 2023.

### **Risk Management**

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

### **Equality Impact**

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

### **Human Resources/Organisational Development**

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

### **Commercial/Procurement**

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

### **Council Plan**

11. 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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