
Dudley Schools Forum – 25th February 2014

Report of the Interim Director of Children's Services

Dedicated Schools Grant Planning Process 2014/15 - Update

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with a further update in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant budget planning process and to agree the Central Expenditure budgets for 2014/15.

Discussed at HTCF – BWG

2. Yes – 14 February 2014.

Schools Forum Role and Responsibilities

3. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct Department for Education (DfE) grant: the Dedicated School Grant (DSG).
4. The Forum is the 'guardian' of the local Schools Budget, and its distribution among schools and other bodies, and therefore must be closely involved throughout the development process.
5. Schools Forum Regulations 2013 state that Forum must decide on the Central Expenditure met from the Dedicated Schools Grant where:
 - i. The Local Authority proposes and Schools Forum decides for each budget line:
 - b. Growth fund (to meet requirements for basic need and infant class size regulations)
 - c. Falling rolls fund for surplus places in good or outstanding schools where a population bulge is expected in 2-3 year
 - d. Funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth
 - e. Equal pay back-pay
 - f. Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils
 - g. Early years expenditure
 - ii. The Local Authority proposes up to the value committed in 2013/14 and Schools Forum decides for each budget line:
 - h. Admissions
 - i. servicing of schools forum
 - iii. The Local Authority proposes up to the value committed in 2013/14 and where expenditure has already been committed and Schools Forum decides for each budget line:
 - j. Capital expenditure funded from revenue
 - k. Contribution to combined budgets
 - l. Schools budget centrally funded termination of employment costs

- m. Schools budget funded prudential borrowing costs
- n. Special education needs transport costs

Actions for Schools Forum

- 6. For Schools Forum to note the updated information in respect of the DSG and to approve the Central Expenditure budgets proposed by the Interim Director of Children's Services for the 2014/15 financial year.

Attachments to Report

- 7. Contributions to combined budgets – update on services provided- Appendix A

Karen Cocker
Children's Services Finance Manager
7 February 2014

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Dedicated Schools Grant Planning Process 2014/15 - Update

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with a further update in respect of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget planning process and to agree the Central Expenditure budgets for 2014/15.

Background Consultation

2. At the January Schools Form meeting Members were advised that the DSG can only be used for the purposes of the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations. The Schools Budget consists of delegated budgets allocated to individual schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Early Years Provision in Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVIs) providers, a budget for other provision for pupils which local authorities fund centrally, which now includes the bulk of high needs provision, including post-school provision up to age 25, together with centrally retained expenditure in respect of special education needs and early years services.
3. The DfE present the DSG is in three un-ring fenced, funding blocks for the local authority:
 - Schools Block;
 - Early Years Block; and
 - High Needs Block
4. For 2014/15 a series of central expenditure controls remain a requirement for Schools Forum to approve. Authorities are free to move funding between the blocks provided that they comply with requirements of the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and central expenditure.
5. This report provides Forum with an update in respect of the DSG allocation for 2014/5 and seeks approval in respect of the proposed central expenditure budgets for 2014/15.

DSG Budget Update for 2014/15

6. Since the January report to Forum, there have been no further DSG funding updates from the DfE. Therefore Table 1 is presented for information purposes however, Forum should note that the following adjustments are expected.

- i. Early Years Block will be amended in the Summer of 2014 and Spring 2015 for updated pupil count data.
- ii. Post 16 SEN and 19-24 LDD budget of £1.272m is still under discussion with EFA in respect of this new responsibility which was effective from August 2013.
- iii. Growth for planned post 16 FE places in the High Needs Block.

Table 1 -Dudley Provisional Dedicated Schools Grant 2014/15 at January 2014

	Pupil Data	Unit of Funding	Schools Block £m	Early Years Block £m	High Needs Block £m
Total Funding Pupil Led	42,822	£4,459.29	190.956		
Total Funding Pupil Led	2,788	£3,650.97		10.179	
Newly Qualified Teachers			0.065		
Carbon Reduction Commitment Tax			-0.522		
2 Year Olds Early Education including Trajectory funding of £506,374				4.650	
Baseline Funding					27.913
Post 16 Schools SEN Funding					0.690
Provisional Post 16 SEN and 19-25 LDD non school					1.352
Provisional 2014/15 DSG Budget			£190.499	£14.829	£29.955
Provisional Total			£235.283m		

7. A further update will be provided at the March meeting in preparation for the commencement of the 2014/15 financial year.

Central Expenditure Budgets 2014/15 – Schools Forum Approval

8. The Schools Forum Regulations state that Forum must approve items of central expenditure, as defined in Table 2 and 3 of this report. The full guidance is detailed on the first page of this report.
9. For Table 2, Forum must approve each item of expenditure, however there is no restriction placed by the Regulations on the value of the budget.

Table 2 – 2014/15 Central Expenditure Budgets For Schools Forum Approval – No Restrictions on Value

Central spend on	Value for 2013/14	Value for 2014/15	Comments
Funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth	none	none	Expenditure incurred due to a significant growth in pupil numbers as a result of the local authority's duty under section 13(1) of the 1996 Act to secure that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population in their area, and expenditure incurred in order to make provision for extra classes in order to comply with the School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes (England) Regulations 2012.
Equal pay back-pay	none	none	Centrally retained provision for meeting the cost of equal pay settlements in schools.
Places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils (RBPI)	£95,700	£107,900	In making any grant or other payment in respect of fees or expenses (of whatever nature) which are payable in connection with the attendance of pupils at a school which is not maintained by any local authority. <i>Relates to 7 pupils boarding: 3 at Wolverhampton Royal School; 1 at Bloomfield; and 1 at Old Swinford Hospital School 1 at Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School 1 placement to be determined. These placements relate to either looked after children (LAC) or children on the edge of care.</i>
Early years expenditure (RBRM, RBPS, RBRP)	1,030,834	1,141,700	Early years centrally retained spending: from the early years proforma on children under 5. <i>Early Years Contingency £80k; Early Years Budgets in respect of delegated service items £59k; Early Years Foundation Advice and co-ordination £553k; Teacher supporting Children Centres; £120k; £330k Family support for two year olds (to be confirmed in a separate report)</i>
Carbon reduction commitment (RBTO)	£444,799	£6,606	Cost of the purchase of Carbon Reduction Commitment allowances in relation to PRUs. From April 2014 the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has announced the decision to withdraw all state funded schools in England from CRC participation and thus has removed the budget from the LA control

10. For Table 3, Forum must approve each item of expenditure detailed, there is a restriction placed up to the value committed in 2013/14 and where expenditure has already been committed.

Table 3 – 2014/15 Central Expenditure Budgets For Schools Forum Approval – Restricted to Cash Limit of 2013/14 Expenditure

Central spend on	Value for 2013/14	Value for 2014/15	Comments
Admissions (RBRY)	331,400	331,400	Expenditure incurred in connection with the Authority's functions under section 85A of the 1998 Act (as inserted by s46 2002 Act) . This includes the administration of the system of admissions of pupils to schools.
Servicing of schools forum (RBWF)	13,100	13,100	Expenditure incurred in connection with the authority's functions of running the forum as defined under section 47A of the 1998 Act (addition under Section 43 of Education Act 2002) (establishment and maintenance of, and consultation with, schools forums).
Capital expenditure funded from revenue (RYBA)	66,000	66,000	Expenditure commonly known as CERA (capital expenditure which an authority expects to charge to a revenue account of the authority within the meaning of section 22 of the Local Government Act 2003). <i>Relates to heavy duty kitchen replacement programme of equipment.</i>
Contribution to combined budgets (RACM)	350,700	333,000	Expenditure under this heading should only reflect the contribution to a combined service approved by the schools forum (paragraph 4 (c) of Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013). <i>Astley Burf £10k; School Visits £31k; CRC reduction £100k; DART £42k; Anti bullying £23k; Place planning £33k; Safeguarding £40k; Information Governance £23k; Statistical work £31k. See Appendix A for details</i>
Schools budget centrally funded termination of employment costs (RAEB)	71,200	71,200	Expenditure in respect of premature retirement costs, or for the purposes of securing the resignation of any person employed in a maintained school where there are consequential savings to the schools budget and such cost have been approved by the Schools Forum. <i>Expenditure in respect of Dudley school closures.</i>
Schools budget funded prudential borrowing costs	none	none	Expenditure incurred in repayment of loans under paragraph 4(a) of Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013 .

De- Delegations 2014/15

11. Schools Forum approved the de-delegations for 2014/15 at the December 2013 meeting. These are now summarised in Table 4, for information.

12. An outturn report will be provided to Schools Forum in respect of the 2014/15 financial year at the June 2015 meeting.

Table 4 – De-delegations Approved By Schools Forum in December 2013 – Relating to Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools

De-delegation for mainstream schools for:	Value for 2014/15	Comments
Contingencies (RACG & RAHG)	181,362	This “expenditure on the schools specific contingency” is central expenditure deducted for the purpose of ensuring that monies are available to enable increases in a school’s budget share after it has been allocated where it subsequently becomes apparent that a governing body have incurred expenditure which it would be unreasonable to expect them to meet from the school’s budget share
Staff costs - supply cover –Union Facilities time (RACJ)	209,584	Expenditure in making payments to, or in providing a temporary replacement - taking part in trade union activities
Staff costs - supply cover – NQT (RAFG)	283,133	Expenditure in making payments to, or in providing a temporary replacement
Support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups (RBNN)	247,690	Expenditure for the purposes of improving the performance of under-performing pupils from ethnic minority groups; and meeting the specific needs of bilingual pupils
Behaviour support services- LACES (RBPW)	26,002	Cost of providing or purchasing specialist behaviour support services, both advisory and teaching
Library services (RAGD)	218,010	Expenditure on services to primary schools provided by libraries.
Primary PRU Outreach Service	234,285	Support to primary schools in respect of pupils with behavioural issues.
Total De-Delegations	£1,400,066	
Licences/subscriptions (RAHA)	76,116	Copyright Licensing Agency & Music Publishers Association. Expenditure on licence fees or subscriptions paid on behalf of schools.

Copy Right Licensing

13. The DfE has agreed with the following agencies to purchase a single national licence managed by the DfE for all state-funded schools in England:
- Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)
 - Music Publishers Association (MPA)
 - Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA)
 - Education Recording Agency (ERA)
 - Motion Picture Licensing Company (MPLC), and
 - Filmbank Distributors Ltd. (for the PVSL)
14. This means that local authorities and schools will no longer need to negotiate individual licences. There will be savings both in administration and in the overall cost of the licence. The DfE will pay the cost, including VAT, to the agencies and will provide this as a service to local authorities at a charge. This means that local authorities can continue to reclaim VAT on the licences as they do now. These arrangements will cover recoupment Academies as well as maintained schools, and the DfE will allow local authorities to hold this money centrally rather than include it in school budgets. Authorities should take into account that schools will no longer have to pay for these licences when calculating school budgets.
15. For Dudley the charge for 2013/14 was set at £76,116 and details for 2014/15 re yet to be announced.

Annual Consultation Process

16. The Regulations also state that the Local Authority must consult with the Schools Forum annually in respect of the following in order that Schools Forum can give a view.
- Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs;
 - Arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
 - Arrangements for early years provision;
 - Administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants.
17. Further detailed information will be provided at the March 2014 meeting.

Finance

18. The funding of schools is prescribed by the Department for Education (DfE) through the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2013 which are effective from 1 January 2014 and relate to the 2014/15 financial year.
19. Schools Forums are regulated by the regulated by the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

20. From 1st April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct grant; Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

21. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.


Equality Impact

22. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

23. Schools Forum to :

- To approve the central expenditure budgets for 2014/15, as detailed in Table 2;
- To approve the central expenditure budgets for 2014/15, as detailed in Table 3;
- To note the final de-delegations budgets for 2014/15, as detailed in Table 4.



Pauline Sharratt

Interim Director of Children's Services

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Contribution to a Combined Service Approved by the Schools Forum

1. An outturn report is presented to the June Schools Forum meeting to report the expenditure for the financial year together with the service provision details.
2. However, for the purposes of approving this budget line for 2014/15 brief details of the combined services budgets are provided below.
3. **Astley Burf**
The £10,300 contribution from the DSG enables the centre to offer the outdoor adventure experience to children who are eligible for free school meals at no charge, the centre has been able to remain financially viable.
4. **Staying Safe on School Trips**
These funds provide the framework for the risk assessment of off-site educational visits by Dudley children and young people. The continuing costs of training with regards to service development and health and safety issues, and the maintenance of the on-line system used for reporting and recording the visits are also supported from these funds.
5. **School Safeguarding Trainer**
The funding enables the Schools Safeguarding Trainer to deliver safeguarding sessions in the school environment.
6. **Schools Information Governance Officer (SIGO)**
The funding enables the SIGO to work proactively to ensure schools are aware of and are meeting their information governance responsibilities.
7. **Place Planning Support Officer**
The support analyst post provides much needed resilience within the place planning team, providing critical support for the place planning function. This involves improving and updating the pupil forecasting model which in turn links directly to the local authority mandatory DfE School Capacity Return.
8. **Pupil Census**

The funding is used to pay for staff to support the school census and school workforce census data collections. This enables more detailed work to be performed and maximisation of the Pupil Premium funding for schools, in

particular working with the Free School Meals team to highlight where pupils had been authorised to receive a free school meal but hadn't been included as such on their School Census return.

9. Carbon Reduction Commitment

The Tables below outline the programme/costs put forward to Schools Forum in 2012 with the expectation that each school would see reductions of 10% in energy use as a direct result of the programme.

Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Nursery			1		1
Primary	22	19	18	19	78
Secondary	9	2	2	2	15
Special	1	2	1	3	7
Academy	1	1	2	1	5
Pupil Referral Units		2	2		4
Total	33	26	26	25	110

Nature of Expenditure	Yr 1 12/13 £000	Yr 2 13/14 £000	Yr 3 14/15 £000	Yr 4 15/16 £000	Yr 5 16/17 £000	Yr 6 17/18 £000	Total Cost approved by Schools Forum £000
Project Officer	33.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	33.0	5.0	221.0
Project Support	1.2	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.2		7.8
Mechanical and Electrical Services	19.9	20.2	22.2	23.2	16.5		102.0
Energy Surveys	15.0	28.0	26.0	25.0	8.0		102.0
Total	69.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	58.7	5.0	432.8

Progress Update

- In addition to the 10 pilot schools which have all been revisited, we are/have been actively involved with a further 36 schools/academies.
- We are awaiting contact from 5 schools that we have sent three emails to in order to include them in the programme and will contact 8 more schools to get involved after the Easter break.
- 42 of these schools have received their Assessment of Energy Saving Opportunities report from Briar Associates and 25 of the schools have discussed the reports recommendations with a Buildings and Estates Project Officer.
- We have worked with the schools to try and implement as many of the operational improvements as possible.

- 39 of the schools have had an out of hours electrical load survey carried out. Some schools are unoccupied for up to 6000 hours per year. Electrical items left on out of hours can be a major cause of energy waste.
- 31 of the schools have had a report produced for their out of hours usage, 21 of the schools have discussed the findings with a Buildings and Estates Project Officer and have looked at how they can reduce the electricity wasted when the building is empty.
- These 21 settings have also looked at the active labelling of light switches. In many schools, rooms can have excessive installed lighting, often arranged such that the individual rows of light fittings can be switched separately. Labelling the switches with red/green dots could reduce the amount of electricity used on lighting.
- 4 of the schools have had a Mechanical Energy Savings Assessment carried out. Approximately 50% of the money that schools spend on energy is used for heating, savings of 15-20% can be achieved simply by ensuring that heating systems are being controlled effectively. 3 schools have received reports, have discussed the findings with a Buildings and Estates Project Officer and are in the process of implementing the no cost recommendations.
- In addition to this, Buildings and Estates Project Officers have attended numerous governors meetings, schools eco group meetings and school senior management meetings to assist heads with getting the carbon management message across to key stakeholders.
- As well as working with each setting to ensure that schools are scheduling their computers to shut down when not in use, we are liaising directly with RM who ensured that for the first time, all PC's in all Dudley schools were powered down over the recent Christmas holiday. This will continue to be the case for all future holiday periods. We are also currently interrogating the existing corporate contracts for the supply of gas and electricity to schools to ensure that the tariffs and charges paid by schools are correct and represent best value.

Benefits

Potential Savings Highlighted within Briar Reports/Out of Hours Surveys/Active Labelling of Switches/Heating Surveys

- The 42 Briar Associates reports highlight that over £220,000 of savings could be made each year across these settings by implementing a few simple operational improvements which have little or no cost.
- These reports also highlight that a further £580,000 of savings could be made each year at these settings, but this would require nearly £6,000,000 of investment.
- Within this £6,000,000 potential investment work is an amount of £825,000 worth of individual projects that each have a pay back period of less than five

years which if carried out would result in a saving of £220,000 made each year.

- A number of the schools that we are involved with have carried out some of the low cost recommendations in the report and some of the more significant investment projects have been carried out at schools funded through the AMP scheme or through schools devolved capital allocations.
- The work that we are carrying out alongside schools shows where the potential £220,000 saving per year without investment highlighted in the Briars reports can be achieved.
- The 31 out of hours reports highlight that over £90,000 could be saved each year if all electrical appliances were switched off when the schools were unoccupied. This has equated to between 5 and 20 per cent of the various schools total electricity bill.
- To date 2 of the 21 settings that have looked at the active labelling of light switches have completed the saving exercise and calculated that £8,000 should be saved each year by only having the lighting that is required on in school.
- The 3 heating reports highlight £2,000 of savings that can be made at these settings. The settings visited to date have all been primary schools so it is anticipated that this figure will increase substantially at the larger secondary settings.
- Whilst carrying out an out of hours survey at one of Dudley's schools during the last Easter holidays, the hot tap was found running in two locked science laboratories. By turning off the taps it has been calculated that £1,935 was saved from the next utilities bills (water and gas).

Savings Actually Achieved at settings

- We are very much reliant on schools providing regular meter readings in order to determine how effective our assistance has been within schools. We have asked each school that we are working with to provide meter readings at the start and end of each half term period in order for us to be able to compare consumptions during the various term time and holiday periods.
- The majority of the work that we have done to date at schools will have had an impact on the electricity consumption rather than the gas consumption.
- Of the schools that we were involved with early in the programme that have provided meter readings the positive impact that we have had can be highlighted as follows:-
- Gig Mill used 3584 units of electricity during the autumn term half term period in 2013 compared with 5124 units the previous year.

- Wollescote used 2679 units of electricity during the autumn term half term period in 2013 compared with 3758 units the previous year.
- Netherbrook used 523 units of electricity during the autumn term half term period in 2013 compared with 1559 units the previous year.
- In addition to the meter readings provided by schools, at thirteen settings we have automated meter readings to the electricity supply which provides readings every half hour, every day of the year.
- Of the schools that we have been involved with the positive impact that we have had can be highlighted as follows:-
 - We provided feedback to the estates manager at Wordsley High School on 19th September 2013 following an out of hours energy survey carried out at the school. Between 1st October 2013 and 5th February 2014 the school used 173,066 KWh of electricity compared to 186,712 KWh of electricity during the identical period the previous years. This is a reduction of 8%.
 - We provided feedback to the bursar at Hillcrest Secondary School on 5th September 2013 following an out of hours energy survey carried out at the school. Between 1st October 2013 and 5th February 2014 the school used 206,792 KWh of electricity compared to 210,044 KWh of electricity during the identical period the previous years. This is a reduction of 2%
 - We provided feedback to the bursar at Pedmore Technology College on 18th June 2013 following an out of hours energy survey carried out at the school. Between 1st July 2013 and 5th February 2014 the school used 228,257 KWh of electricity compared to 232,195 KWh of electricity during the identical period the previous years. This is a reduction of 2%
- The schools that we have not been involved with yet continue to use more electricity year on year.
 - Ridgewood High School used 388,622 KWh of electricity during 2013 compared to 386,958 KWh during 2012, an increase of 0.5%
 - Leasowes High School used 781, 310 KWh of electricity during 2013 compared to 767,277 KWh during 2012, an increase of 2%
 - Castle High School used 416,298 KWh of electricity during 2013 compared to 416,575 KWh during 2012, being virtually unchanged.
- Dudley Schools spend in excess of £1,500,000 per year on electricity. A 4% reduction in electricity use across the school estate would save £60,000 per year. A 2% increase in electricity use would cost £30,000 per year.
- The impact we are having in schools is having a positive effect on reducing electricity consumption and as more schools carry out more of the no cost operational improvements this impact will increase. Gas consumption will also be reduced as a result of implementing the no cost recommendations within

the gas surveys ensuring that heating systems are being controlled more effectively.

10. Anti-Bullying Work in Dudley Schools

- Bullying happens in every school and in every community and if effective initiatives are not in place, it creates a negative and dysfunctional environment. In May 2013, an Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator was appointed to provide a lead on anti-bullying strategy. The purpose of the post is to raise the profile of anti-bullying work, support schools and other key partners to promote best practice and to develop whole school approaches to prevent and respond to bullying. The importance of such work is regularly highlighted both in the press and in government guidance. National focus on bullying continues in the advice given by the Department for Education and in the framework for OFSTED inspections.

Summary of Progress

- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has adopted a “Research-Plan-Do-Review-Revise” approach to design, implement and evaluate a pilot programme. The Dudley Schools Anti-Bullying Pledge Scheme was launched in September 2013, providing a framework and tools for action, leading to recognition and accreditation. Participation in the scheme raises awareness among children and young people of their responsibilities to one another, enabling them to make informed choices about their behaviour and feel secure, supported and better able to seek help. The Anti-Bullying Pledge Scheme supports schools to address bullying issues and gives parents/carers increased confidence in the school's ability to prevent and manage bullying. Schools can have a major impact on both the levels and severity of bullying by adopting the Pledge Scheme. Clear procedures that are understood by all, and supported by effective policies which are embedded within the school, can reduce the incidence of bullying significantly.
- Following email circulation, and presentations to selected meetings, including Safeguarding leads, LACES, senior leaders' forums etc., over thirty schools expressed an interest in joining the scheme. Thirty places were booked on a training course for senior staff and key practitioners at Saltwells EDC in October, and a steady stream of registrations for the scheme has followed. Initial meetings were held between the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and senior leaders in twelve schools during November and December, with more planned from January. Each Township has been invited to develop an Anti-Bullying network and local training, collaboration and sharing of good practice is already planned in Stourbridge, Halesowen and Central Dudley. In December, Mount Pleasant Primary was awarded full pledge status after whole school community consultation and submission of key documents, including an Anti-Bullying Development Plan, Policy, and Accreditation Sheet. A further ten schools are close to achieving accreditation.
- A Steering group has been convened made up of key stakeholders with expertise and experience. The group will review the Council's Anti-Bullying Policy, develop the Anti-Bullying Strategy and form a panel to accredit further submissions for the Dudley Schools Anti-Bullying Pledge Scheme Status. The group will have terms of reference and clear standards for accreditation to

ensure consistency.

- Those schools participating in the pilot will have the opportunity to contribute to the final programme by giving feedback and suggestions for improvement. It is envisaged that those schools will take the scheme forward in their own areas, sharing good practice, cascading training and participating in the accreditation process with partner schools.
- In order to maximise the benefits to Dudley schools, the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is working with strategic regional and national partners. These include Anti-Bullying Alliance, Beat Bullying, Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) Award, Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton Councils and Youthworks Consulting Ltd. These partners provide support and expertise in specific areas of anti-bullying work. At local level, there have been several collaborative events for Dudley schools to access, which include running workshops at a Youth Service event in Council Chambers, the 6th Dudley Anti-Bullying Debate, Show Racism the Red Card, E-Safety Strategy and Training, Drama Productions and Resilience & Assertiveness (RAP) training. Additionally, a Cyber Survey is planned to target all 10-16 year olds in the Borough in late March.

Evaluation

- The introduction of the Pledge Scheme has already highlighted good practice as well as areas for improvement in participating schools. The framework has enabled schools to review their anti-bullying policies and self-evaluation of a range of pro-active and reactive strategies. The process has provided opportunities for consultation with all teaching and non-teaching staff, parents/carers, governors and other key stakeholders and has raised awareness of the importance of anti-bullying work. It has also provided a vehicle for communicating clear, consistent messages and identified emerging trends. Where cluster groups are developing, there are greater opportunities to share ideas and develop consistent approaches through transition. Some examples of the impact include: headteachers sharing and discussing innovative strategies with senior leaders in other schools; analysis of data to inform training needs and highlighting of vulnerable groups, assisting individual schools as well as supporting the handling of bullying related complaints.
- Partnership working at local, regional and national level has enabled more capacity to address bullying issues as well as offer further opportunities for development and accreditation. Specialist help is more accessible as well as signposting to a wider support network.

11. Education Liaison

The role and responsibilities of the Education Liaison Officer

- The primary focus of the post is to work closely with schools regarding domestic abuse and the impact of that abuse on children. The Officer also works closely with the Child Protection Officer (Education) to support schools

with their safeguarding remit, including the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process.

- The key responsibilities of the ELO are to ensure that schools are included and are key to the gathering and sharing of information where there are concerns about domestic abuse. By sharing information in an appropriate and timely way it is anticipated that children/parent/carers would benefit from accessing services where they can receive the correct support and interventions in order to safeguard them appropriately.
- The DART meets approximately three times per week. It is a multi-agency panel where Social Care, Health, Police and Education (Education Liaison Officer) use the Barnardo's Multi Agency Risk Identification Threshold Scales to assess the risk to children/unborn babies resident or normally resident in a household where domestic abuse occurs.
- Confidential information is shared with school partners in order to establish if there are any concerns for the child in school, to inform their school that a child is experiencing domestic abuse in the family and to consider if there is a need for further intervention support including the use of the CAF process.
- There have been 1184 Domestic Abuse notifications from April 2013 to December 2013, where a child is resident in the home and was either present or witnessed the incident. However 128 of those have been screened at Level 2 where it has been decided that that risk level is sufficient to justify a referral to school for information sharing or further intervention. It is the responsibility of the ELO to have those discussions with school and to offer appropriate professional support for any interventions where appropriate.
- MARAC meets fortnightly. It is a Multi Agency Panel that is chaired by West Midlands Police and responds to the needs of high risk victims of domestic abuse. Education is represented at MARAC by the ELO.
- Where there are children whose parent/carer is risked assessed as a high risk victim schools are always contacted to establish if they have any concerns or information that they wish to share with the MARAC.
- There have been 184 victims referred to MARAC from April 2013 to 20th December 2013 out of which there have been 213 children discussed at MARAC. All of these children have a parent or carer who has been a high risk victim. Schools have been notified of all those children unless they are below school age.
- When the agenda is set for the MARAC meeting the Child Protection Lead's in schools are contacted prior the meeting to establish whether they have any concerns about the child and/or have any information they consider relevant to drawing up an action plan to help safeguard the victim and their child. The information given is then shared at the conference. The information provided by schools is often crucial to the process, as school staff often know the victim / children better than other agencies working with the family. Schools can provide significant intelligence about how the child presents, how the child

perceives and verbalised their experience of witnessing an abusive adult relationship.

- Schools also have a wealth of knowledge about the local community and family environment that can be a contributing factor in the dynamics of an abusive relationship. Following the MARAC information is shared with the school so they are fully aware of the environment within which the child is living and they can assess how this can impact on the child's emotional wellbeing and educational attainment. The ELO can be given a specific task that will need to be carried out in partnership with schools and which will form part of the overall safeguarding plan for the victim and their child/children.
- Examples of where schools and ELO have worked together is in a number of cases where the victim of the abuse has agreed to a CAF and school/ELO work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that there is robust plan in place to ensure children and victim are safe. This can include sharing information about any restrictive orders served against the perpetrator, making sure that the children are given ongoing support in the school with access to counselling or something as simple as staff keeping a watchful eye on their emotional state. The children know they have a safe adult they can approach when they feel they need any additional support or have any worries that they wish to discuss.

Feedback from Schools on the role of Education Liaison Officer.

- Earlier this year schools were asked to give feedback on whether or not they felt it necessary that schools are notified of incidents of domestic abuse and how being party to that knowledge can assist them in improving outcomes for the children in their school.

The feedback is summarised below:-

Question - Is it useful to be informed of domestic abuse incidents that involve families in your school?

- 'Yes – if the child has been affected and witnessed the abuse then it is crucial that we are aware of it'
- 'If we were not informed through DART we would often have no idea of any problems in the family, however, the children may well be showing signs of distress in school'.
 - 'Children who have witnessed or been part of domestic abuse are always affected to one degree or another. Therefore, it helps us in school to know of incidents in order that we can support the child/children if they require support. Some do, some don't but at least we would be aware and so prepared'.
 - 'We are not informed by any other agency. For pastoral support provision it is key that we understand the difficulties our children are experiencing and can provide help/support when needed'.

Question – Prior to the appointment of Education Liaison Officer in April this year were you informed of domestic abuse incidents

- 'Previously by the DART team. The liaison is invaluable'.
- 'On occasions but mostly not at all'.
- 'When the service (DART) first began, some years ago'.
- 'Only through a social worker if it involved the child being put on the at risk register'.
- 'This was through out school health advisor never directly to the school. This was always several weeks, even months, later'.

Question – Do you think that being aware of incidents of domestic abuse can assist your school in contributing to positive outcomes for children in your school?

- 'There can be child protection issues but also a case for helping children's wellbeing or even referrals for counselling. In addition it is important that if you have any concerns about a child in school and you intend to contact parents you are then armed with all the information'.
- 'Informed professionals can only enhance provision'. Assistance with CAF's and supporting families has been beneficial'.
- 'When families are in difficulty school is able to provide significant support and the children make better progress or are more settled in school'.

Question – Do you have any other comments about the Education Liaison Officer post?

- 'Helpful to know who to contact with any concerns'.
 - 'The greater the dialogue that goes on, whether domestic abuse or any other child protection issue, the better. The sooner a school can respond to the child's need the better for that child, emotionally and educationally'.
 - 'Thank you for the work that you do'.
- 'Just that this role is very important to school is our experience if anything to go by – thank you'.