



SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING

13th February 2020

DSG Recovery Plan – Project Progress Update

1. Purpose

To update members of School Forum on the implementation of the Recovery Plan projects which are designed to reduce the existing pressure on the DSG High Needs Block.

2. Background

In June 2019 School Forum supported £357k of additional annual investment from the High Needs Block to develop a range of initiatives which aim to increase capacity within mainstream schools to support children and young people with SEND. The projects focus on the three priority areas as agreed through the school summit meetings with Head Teachers:

1. Children with SEND should be supported, as far as is possible and appropriate, within the least restrictive education environment close to home.
2. Current high needs funding and support interventions for children with SEND are not appropriately distributed and requires redistribution.
3. Additional support and funding are required earlier in the education system with investment in different types of support within and across mainstream schools.

The main projects currently identified and funded through the investments are:

1. Primary Schools Nurture Model: To implement a pilot project designed to enhance nurture based practice across primary schools providing early support to children with social emotional and mental health needs. The project is led by one primary school with a focus on direct support within a hub and across primary schools.
2. Specialist Teacher Support: To progress a small pilot project providing additional specialist education capacity across a school cluster for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
3. Therapeutic Support: To identify and implement evidence based interventions and therapeutic models which could support children with SEND and children with additional social and emotional needs which impact on their learning.
4. Education Inclusion Partnership: To progress a schools inclusion partnership which shares responsibility and coordinates support and provision for complex cases and children with additional support needs across the school system, both within the primary and secondary sector.

Managing the pressure – Department for Education (DfE) Requirements

The DfE have subsequently withdrawn the need to submit a formal recovery plan for areas with an overall cumulative DSG deficit of 1% or more at the end of the financial year but have reiterated the need for local authorities with deficits end of the financial year to co-operate with DfE in handling that situation. In particular, the local authority must now:

1. Provide information as and when requested by the department about its plans for managing its DSG account in the 2020 to 2021 financial year.
2. Provide information as and when requested by the department about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget.
3. Meet with officials from the DfE as and when requested to discuss the local plans and financial situation.
4. Keep School Forum regularly updated about the DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential saving.

Subsequently a recovery plan and initiatives that will help prevent the existing pressure remains imperative and will ensure we meet the requirements of the DfE.

Financial Modelling - Latest Position

To inform the Recovery Plan a five year projection of the High Need budget was produced, which sets out the likely funding and costs for supporting children within the SEND system over the next five years. The model utilises a number of demand based assumptions and highlights the extent of the challenge with the High Needs Block likely to continue to have a significant pressure with a potential accumulated overspend of £600k over the next five years. Note this figure has reduced significantly due to the increase in High Needs funding Rutland will receive from 2020/21.

The model provides a useful tool for showing the potential impact of any interventions and system changes on our financial position. For this purpose each project has been modelled to highlight their potential financial impact on the DSG and if projects achieve their anticipated outcomes with an applied 75% success rate, the recovery plan could have a positive impact and reduce the DSG overspend by circa 330k over five years.

The financial model is based on a number of assumptions of success e.g. proportionate reduction in special school placements etc. and it must be noted that each action within the recovery plan factors in assumed impact and there are no guarantees to each element. The success of projects is also subject to a number of influencing factors including the commitment of schools to engage, test and commit to alternative approaches.

3. Project Progress

Nurture Pilot

- The nurture model will focus on strengthening approaches across primary schools and the project aims to develop outward facing expertise and advice to help primary

schools adopt evidence based principles and practice to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH).

- Edith Weston School are leading the delivery and will be aiming to provide outreach expertise across our school network as well as providing a small number of on-site places to complex cases.
- A project board is in place which meets regularly and who are working on admission arrangements for the provision including referral processes, operating models etc. Pathways planning and communication of this to schools is in development.
- Staff are now in place who have and are training in nurture principles.
- The provision is due to launch in March, however children have already been placed at the school who were at risk of escalating into special school provision.

Specialist Teacher Support

- Rutland County Council have commissioned Leicester City Council to deliver additional specialist SEMH teaching support for two days a week which began in December.
- There are currently two specialist teachers providing support in Rutland schools and their role involves delivering practical advice and support, including case work, whilst working to identify creative teaching and learning approaches or suitable adaptations which can be delivered to support inclusive environments for children with additional needs.
- Due to the limited capacity the provider has focused on those schools where children have been identified as at risk of immediate exclusion due to SEMH needs, and so far the provider has met and delivered support in seven schools. It is intended that the provider will meet with all schools before the end of the financial year.

Education Inclusion Partnerships (EIP)

- An external provider with experience in delivering EIPs has been commissioned for up to two days per week to co-ordinate and oversee implementation.
- At a Rutland Teaching Alliance meeting in December primary schools committed their support to the EIP and agreed in principle to provide funding for each pupil within their school to go into the overall funding pot available for the EIP.
- Five primary schools who are representative of the whole sector have signed up to form the primary partnership panel, these are: English Martyrs, Catmose Primary, Ketton CofE, Cottesmore Academy and Uppingham CofE with another school expressing an interest.
- The group meet regularly and have been designing the relevant processes including terms of reference, referral mechanisms and memorandum of understanding which and are due to be finalised and distributed to schools by 24th February.
- The primary partnership is scheduled to launch on the 20th March. It is anticipated that EIP will draw upon the other provisions within the recovery plan as part of its 'toolkit' of resources.
- Development of an EIP across secondary schools remains in the early stages but it is our intention to progress this utilising the same model within the primary sector and we have begun discussions with other secondary schools who have implemented EIPs.

Therapeutic Support

- This project will support the EIPs by providing a range of services to draw upon when supporting children with SEND. This area remains in its infancy, however we have met with providers to look at options of what could be made available on a spot purchase basis, including a range of health based provisions and specialist teaching support. This work will be put together to form part of a 'toolkit' of interventions for Rutland schools and it is intended that the EIPs will help to inform what provisions are required for children in Rutland.

4. Value for Money and System Review Update

- SEND Consultancy have been commissioned to undertake the review of our DSPs with an initial focus on our specialist nursery and primary provision.
- SEND Consultancy have now begun undertaking site visits engaging the Parks, Oakham CofE and early year's providers to understand the relationship between the early years and our special provisions.
- The work will result in a set of recommendations including options for improvement and potential options for redesign of delivery etc.

5. Measuring Success

The five year budget model will help to measure the success of projects within the recovery plan, however this is limited as a sole guide due to the nature of the SEND landscape e.g. changes in demand. Therefore to help monitor impact more broadly a SEND performance framework is being developed to monitor the health of the system in line with our vision. Key areas which are being considered for inclusion are:

- Measuring the overall percentage of high needs funding which is invested within mainstream provision.
- The movements of children from mainstream to special provisions and vice versa.
- Rates of exclusions and length of time children are without school places.
- Usage and pathways of children through designated special provisions.
- EHCP placement levels in mainstream schools and consult outcomes.

It is intended that this framework will be brought back to a future School Forum for further discussion.

6. Next Steps

Continue to progress each project and monitor their success, gathering feedback from schools with a view to determining next steps.

7. Recommendations

Members of School Forum note the project progress to date.