

	Schools Forum 25 February 2021
	Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People
Updated DSG High Needs Block Management Plan	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	N/A
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Schools Forum, 21 st January 2021: DSG Management Plan
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To update the Schools Forum on the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Management Plan including the timelines of the key strategies to mitigate the deficit.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note the timelines of the key strategies.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. Pupils' development is not linear. As pupils age, the complexity of their needs will change. Some pupils might not have SEND to begin with but will develop SEND as they mature. Others who are considered to have SEND at the beginning of their lives may no longer have these needs later in life As such SEND is not a fixed or permanent characteristic; it is a recognition that at a specific time a child

has additional learning needs. At times, many pupils will require tailored or additional support to fully participate in everything the school has to offer.

- 3.2. As we move through 2020/21 and into the 2021/22 academic year, it is clear that the pandemic and ensuing lockdowns have raised concerns about increased exposure to ‘hidden harms’ as well as lost learning and the impact of social distancing on children and young people’s development and on their mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Even those who have continued to attend school in person have had a far from normal experience. Consequently, Brent Council’s Children and Young People’s Department expect that there will be an increase in the level of additional needs identified in schools and settings that might result in referrals to alternative provision or for an EHC assessment. As we move into a recovery phase, it is even more important that the children’s system work together as soon as needs arise to ensure that children and young people can access the support they need when they need it. Whilst every effort is being taken to address the HNB deficit, progress needs to be considered in the context of the impact of the pandemic.
- 3.3. Brent’s SEND strategy is to enable each young person to realise their potential in an appropriate, inclusive setting whether in a mainstream school, a SEND Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP), a SEND Unit or a special school. ARPs and SEND units on mainstream school sites are designed to allow young people to participate within the mainstream school where appropriate.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The High Needs Block [HNB], element of the Dedicated Schools Grant [DSG] was in £4.9m deficit at the end of 2019/20 and the current forecast as at period 9 December 2020, the in-year deficit is forecast to be £7.5m. This brings the overall forecast cumulative DSG deficit to £12.4m by the end of the financial year.
- 4.2 The main cost driver of the HNB deficit remains the growth in EHCPs. Table 1 below models three scenarios of EHCP growth. The scenarios are “Low” which assumes that EHCP numbers will reduce compared to 2020/21 and level off; “Medium” which assumes a stable increase over the next few years; and “High”, which assumes exponential growth in EHCP numbers.

Table 1

Number of EHCPs	Projected 2020	Projected 2021	Projected 2022	Projected 2023	Projected 2024	Projected 2025
Low	2,807	3,060	3,213	3,373	3,542	3,719
Estimated % Increase	12%	11%	7%	5%	5%	5%
Medium	2,807	3,116	3,427	3,770	4,147	4,562
Estimated % Increase	12%	11%	10%	10%	10%	10%
High	2,807	3,121	3,484	3,952	4,557	5,348
Estimated % Increase	12%	11%	12%	13%	15%	17%

5. Key Strategies to mitigate the High Needs Block deficit and timelines

5.1 As set out in the School Place Planning strategy 2019 – 2023 November 2020 refresh, a number of actions are being taken to expand the range of local placement options for children with SEND and reduce the need for high cost independent sector placements. The ambition is to develop the capacity of schools to support pupils with SEND thereby reducing in out of borough mainstream, special and INMSS spend by at least £1m by 2023/24. Where appropriate the Council will seek to bring pupils out of INMSS into local mainstream provision and reduce the use of INMSS for home tuition where children and young people are awaiting a school place. The expansion in local provision will also meet the need for new places as new EHCPs are established and children and young people move to Brent with an EHCP.

	Action	Milestones	Lead	Timescales (Financial year)
1	<p><u>Expansion of alternative provision</u></p> <p>a) Roundwood Alternative Provision School. A 50 place provision opened January 2021. Provision will offer combined curriculum and therapeutic interventions. Cohort will include CYP with additional needs.</p> <p>b) Broadening the cohort of CYP with additional needs accessing Ashley College on site or through home tuition as respite or transition provision.</p>	<p>Fully operational;</p> <p>Review quarterly</p>	<p>Beckmead Trust</p> <p>Ashley College</p> <p>HOS Inclusion</p>	2021/22
2	<p>Brent Council is working with Brent special schools to expand their Published Admission Number (PAN) over the next 3 years.</p> <p>Scoping underway for primary special expansion. Number of projected places for primary - 12.</p>	<p>June 2021: Cabinet approval for Primary expansion.</p>	<p>HOS Inclusion</p>	2022/23

	Avenue School to increase PAN with new build underway.			
3	Brent Council is working to establish an additional secondary special school in Brent. Proposed places – 150.	2021/22 Cabinet Approval	Operational Director	2024/25
4	Work with current school clusters to explore how needs can be best met locally, focusing on increasing SEND capacity in mainstream through Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs). AY 2021/22- 2022/23 places: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary – up to 36; • Secondary - 28 up to 56 over 2-3 year period. 	January – April 21 school meetings held; May - September 2021 Submission to capital programme board.	HOS Inclusion	2021-2023
5	Options are also being considered by Brent Council with Brent CCG, FE Colleges and school partners to develop a new post 16 skills hub to help meet the demand for education places for young people 16-25 with SEND. Governance arrangements to be developed. Potential for a collaboration/joint venture and income generation. Current post 16 spend – has moved from £3.5m (2019/20) to £4.5m in 2020/21.	Virtual PFA Hub live September 2021; Business case for PFA physical HUB approval in September 2021.	HOS Inclusion	2024/25

5.2 Further developments are underway to manage the rate of EHCP growth and securing provision locally to meet the needs of Brent children. Brent is adopting an approach that builds on jointly meeting the needs of Brent children and recognises that for most children SEND is a dynamic characteristic.

5.3 The expectation is, that with the introduction of the Graduated Approach, improved quality EHC assessments and person centred planning with SMART annual reviews could reduce the numbers of EHCPs to 10% in year growth by 2022/23 (table 1). However, this ambitious target needs to be considered in the context of Covid-19 and the potential impact of increasing need over 2021/22 as opposed to reducing needs. Additionally, improved joint commissioning with Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) should begin to see a reduction in costs to the HNB for therapeutic intervention, including the speech and language contract; and emotional wellbeing provision and interventions.

	Action	Milestones	Lead	Timescales (Financial year)
1.	Reviewing SLCN, MLD, and Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) EHCPs to ensure that resources are targeted appropriately, considering time limited resources where possible.	Review completed April 2021 Joint commissioning September 2021	- HOS Inclusion	2022/23
2.	A new Banding criteria at SEN Support to be established and agreed with Schools Forum.	Feb 2021 - Banding review options paper to HNB sub group; September 2021: new SEN support banding piloted; February 2022 review report published any changes made and implemented from April 2022.	- HOS Inclusion - HOS CYP Finance	2022/23
3.	Introduce a strengthened graduated response and mainstream plus offer, with a Brent moderation programme with SENCOs and Headteachers to address needs earlier, to support children to stay	Pilot to be launched in April 2021; Review over summer term 2021;	- HOS Inclusion	2022/23

	and progress in mainstream without an EHCP. It is proposed that this is called a Graduated Response Programme (GRP) with the aim to reduce the number of requests for EHCPs as modelled in the “Low” scenario in table 1 above. Whole school SEND review to be used to measure outcomes	Full roll out September 2021; Impact review January 2022, April 2022, July 2022. Refresh if required.		
4.	Plans ceasing: Time limited plans introduced as part of the Graduated Approach work, new EHCP process and person centred planning and annual review process. Plans ceasing if no longer needed,	Launch April 2021	- HOS Inclusion	2022/23

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. At the end of the financial year 2020/21 the overall DSG deficit due to pressures in the High Needs Block is projected to be £12.4m. The cost avoidance implications of the key strategies identified to mitigate the deficit will need to be costed, with the aim to recover the deficit over a number of financial years. However the risk remains if the numbers of EHCPs continue to rise above the funding allocation increases to the HNB, the deficit will continue to increase.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1 The key groups affected by the proposals are children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) aged 0-25 in Brent. The Council is committed to inclusive education for all children and young people with SEND in our mainstream schools, enhanced resource schools and special schools.
- 8.2 The DSG HNB Deficit Management Plan has been developed in order to improve outcomes for children and young people and achieve financial

sustainability. The proposals support the needs of children and young people with SEND to be met earlier through evidence based interventions and aim to reduce our reliance on high cost placements in the non-maintained and independent sector, by ensuring that children with SEND can get a good education at a school close to their home.

- 8.3 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no equality implications.

9 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 9.1 Consultation has been undertaken with parents and carers, schools and settings and health providers. This consultation will continue through the piloting of the Graduated Approach Framework and SEN Support Fund during the 2021/22 academic year. An equality analysis will be undertaken as part of the review process of both the Graduated Approach Framework and SEN Support Fund.

10 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 10.1 Not applicable.

Report sign off:

Gail Tolley

Strategic Director of Children and Young People