 <b>Brent</b>	<b>Schools Forum</b> 20 June 2023
	<b>Report from the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</b>
<b>Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND Programme Update</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Sharon Buckby Head of Inclusion Service and Virtual School Headteacher <a href="mailto:sharon.buckby@brent.gov.uk">sharon.buckby@brent.gov.uk</a>  Olufunke Adediran Head of Finance CYP <a href="mailto:Olufunke.adediran@brent.gov.uk">Olufunke.adediran@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To update the Schools Forum on the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note the outcomes of the DBV programme and next steps.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The DfE invited Brent and 54 other local authorities to be part of an 18-month programme called the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme with the objective to “identify local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND”.
- 3.2 The programme aims to ensure that improved delivery is achieved within budget. The programme provided dedicated support through delivery partners i.e., Newton Europe and CIPFA to help the LA identify priority areas for action. They will also provide information on national trends and shared learning to the

DfE, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the NHS.

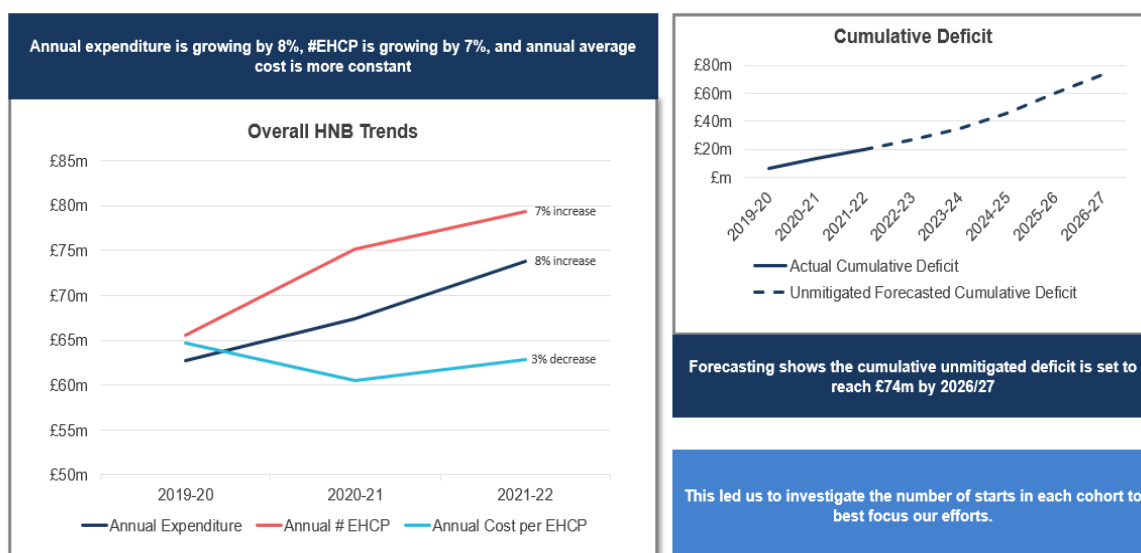
- 3.3 The programme involved submitting a successful bid for £1m grant funding to support the reform of high needs systems with the aim of improving delivery of SEND services for children and young people while achieving efficiencies. The programme supports the delivery of the actions of the Management Plan including those identified by the DBV programme over two financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

#### 4. DBV Findings

- 4.1 The first phase of the DBV programme commenced in October 2022 and was a diagnostic phase which focused on building a baseline and forecasts to understand the volume and type of support Brent's children and young people have been receiving historically, and what it might look like going forward.
- 4.2 The analysis of Brent's data showed that the growth in expenditure against the High Needs Block was mainly due to the rise in the number of children with EHCPs, as opposed to an increase in the average cost per EHCP. This is consistent with the explanations provided as part of the DSG Budget Monitoring presented at previous Schools Forums. Chart 1 below reflects the trends in Brent in terms of High Needs Block spend and unmitigated future deficit.

**Chart 1**

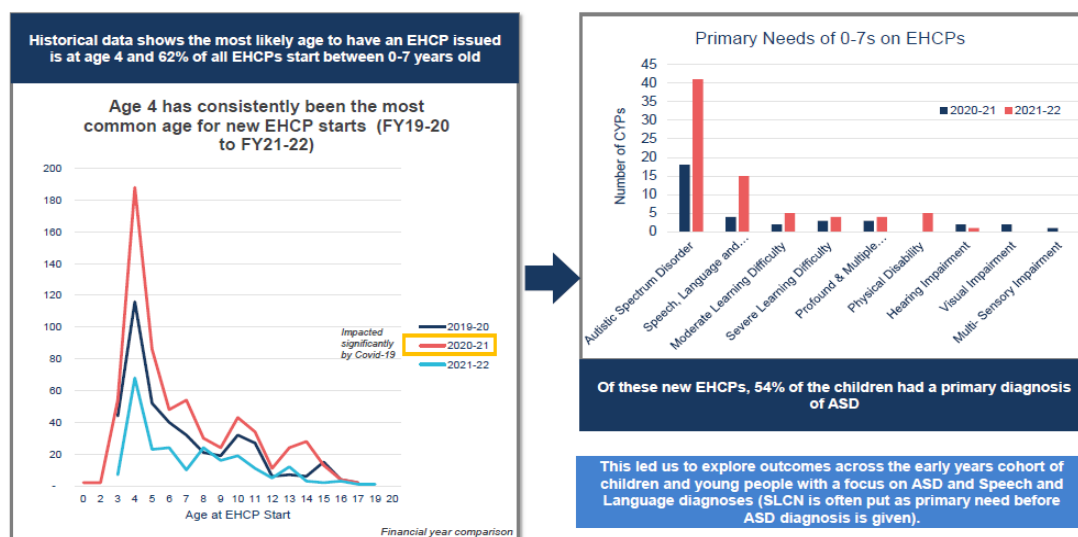
**Increased expenditure is leading to an increased deficit, fuelled by an increase in number of EHCPs**



- 4.3 Another key finding from the analysis was that most EHCPs started at age 4 and continue for an average of 10 years, which triangulates with the local authority's previous understanding. The cohort of under 7s with EHCPs was explored in depth to determine the highest impact changes. Chart 2 reflects the analysis of ECHPs in the 0-7 age group.

## Chart 2

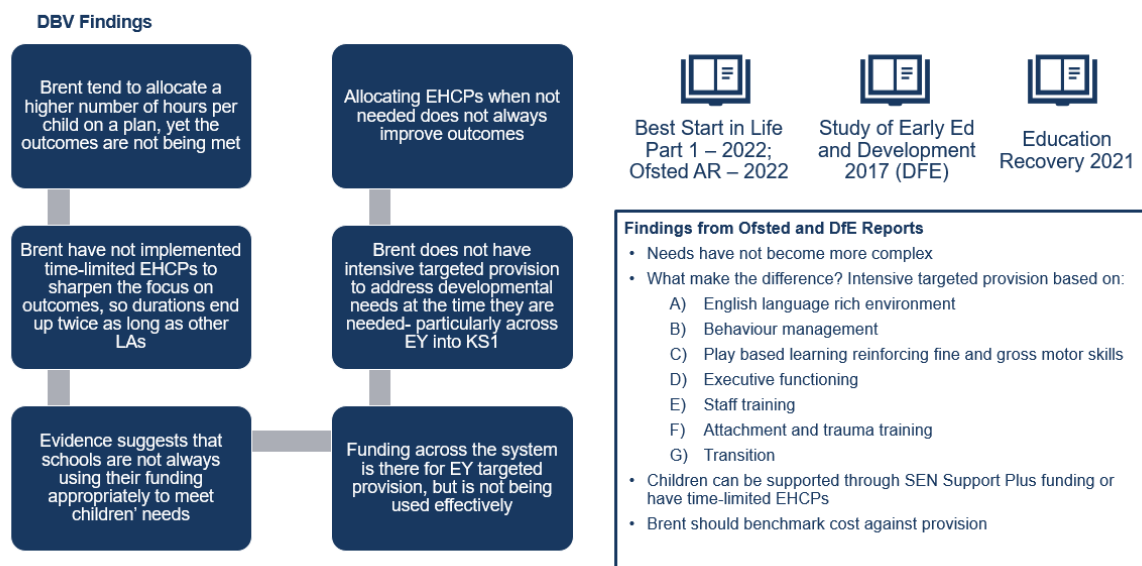
- The majority of new EHCP starts occur in the early years' cohort.



- 4.4 Case Review workshops were undertaken with 25 professionals and enabled evidence to be gathered on the outcomes of children and young people. A summary of the findings is reflected in Chart 3 below:

## Chart 3

- DBV Findings support reflections from the DfE and Ofsted



- 4.5 The findings from the DBV programme identified some opportunities which include:

- 4.5.1 Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child can be achieved without the need for an EHCP, but through targeted support.

4.5.2 Achieving the goals and aspirations of the child through the right duration in mainstream support (time limited EHCPs).

4.5.3 Ensuring the right level of support for the child's goals and aspirations when they start in mainstream could result in fewer hours of support being needed.

## **5. DBV Grant**

5.1 In March 2023 Brent was awarded the £1m grant funding. The impact of the investment is currently estimated as £0.7m with traction expected from 2025/26. The grant will be spent on:

5.1.1 Establishing an Inclusion Assurance Team for a year to review provision and use of funding to support individual pupils and groups of pupils with a view to providing guidance on improving outcomes through time-limited plans and the closure of plans on the achievement of outcomes.

5.1.2 Engaging a SEN commissioner and an analyst to ensure effective use of resources across the system and services including a review of the EHCP banding system.

5.1.3 Developing a test and learn intervention first model to improve early intervention for 0–7-year-olds that meet needs and improve children's ability to thrive in mainstream schools without the need for an EHCP. The programme will commence in September 2023 in one school cluster.

5.2 The DBV programme will not address the historic High Needs Block deficit but will support Brent to return to an in-year balance whilst delivering high-quality services. Efficiencies identified from the programme may allow funds to be released to address historic deficits, but this is not a given.

5.3 The governance structure for the programme has been established with a DBV Board that will report to the Children's Trust. The DBV Board includes primary headteachers and early years representatives. A programme manager has been appointed and recruitment to the Quality Assurance Team and Commissioner is underway.

## **6. DBV Key Insight from Tranche 1 (20 LAs) Diagnostics**

6.1 The findings from the 1<sup>st</sup> Tranche of 20 LAs of which Brent was a part showed that the single highest impact objective to pursue to provide better support for children and young people and reduce the number that need an EHCP or a special school placement, is increasing the ability of local systems to support children in a mainstream setting.

The evidence highlighted three priority drivers to achieve this:

- 6.1.1 Increasing the ability of mainstream schools to provide day-to-day support for children with SEND.
- 6.1.2 Improving the access mainstream schools and children have to wider system resources.
- 6.1.3 Increasing parent-carer confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet their children's needs.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The £1m grant received will not go towards mitigating the historic deficit but will support the system reforms needed to move towards a balanced budget. Any efficiencies identified will enable funds to be released to mitigate the historic deficits.
- 7.2 The risk remains that the main cost driver of the deficit, the number of children and young people with EHCPs will continue to grow and that the HNB funding will not increase in line with continued growth. However, the information gathered from the DBV programme will also give the DfE an understanding of the growth required in the system.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications for this report.

## **9. Equality Implications**

- 9.1 The key groups affected by the proposals are children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25 in Brent. The Council is committed to inclusive education for all children and young people with SEND in mainstream schools, enhanced resource schools and special schools.

## **10. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 10.1 The Lead Member for Children, Young People and Schools is regularly updated on SEND related matters. The High Needs Block Subgroup of the Schools Forum and other stakeholders, such as health colleagues and members of the Inclusion Strategic Board that includes a representative from the Brent Parent Carer Forum, are aware of the DBV programme.

## **11. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)**

- 11.1 Not applicable.

Related documents for reference:

Previous Schools Forum papers on the HNB Management Plan

**Report sign off:**

***Nigel Chapman***

Corporate Director of Children and Young People