

High Needs Working Group – 16/05/2024

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

1p.m. to 2:30p.m.

Attendees:			
Fiona Robinson (FR) Chair	Headteacher – Bensham Manor	✓	
Shelley Davies (SD)	Director of Education	✓	
Kathy Roberts (KR)	Head of Service, SEND Transformation & Delivery	✓	
Mark Southworth (MS)	Consultant Lead, Locality Inclusion Project	X	
Charles Quaye (CQ)	Finance Manager Education	✓	
Keran Currie (KC)	School Governor – Norbury Manor Primary School	✓	
Katie Goodwin (KG)	Headteacher – St Nicolas’	✓	
Helene Greenidge (HG)	Senco Assessor – John Ruskin College	X	
Clare Cranham (CC)	Headteacher – Kensington Avenue	✓	
Julie Evans (JE)	Headteacher – Priory	✓	
Shelley Prince (SP)	Head of Commissioning & Procurement CYP&E	X	
Alfred Donkor (AD)	Commissioning & Contracts Manager	✓	
Diana Mitrea (DMi)	SEND Finance & Quality Assurance Manager	✓	
Elizabeth Webster (EW)	SEND Internship Pathways Officer	✓	
Darran Money (DM)	Education Business Support Lead	X	
Mori Bates (MB)	Clerk	✓	

Agenda Items

1	Apologies and welcome	FR
	Apologies received by MB from SP	
2	Previous Minutes and Actions	FR
	2.1 Previous minutes read and reviewed – agreed to be a true record. 2.2 DMi will be added to the High Needs mailing list.	
3	Therapies Contract Update	AD
	3.1 AD presented in place of SP who was unable to attend the working group. 3.2 AD confirmed that the joint commission contract is coming to an end, with changes in the health service commissioning landscape being imposed. Such changes that the council does not have complete control to continue. 3.3 The ICB will continue community based elements of the therapies whilst the council supports it from an educational perspective, given that a large percentage of EHCPs require SALT.	

	<p>3.4 There have been problems with recruiting therapists and that is creating a waitlist. Due to this, there is a proposal being developed to create a locality scheme where Croydon is divided into three zones (e.g. North, Central and South) and suppliers can then manage the issues around capacity within a set area, especially if a provider cannot give the necessary support. The EHCP data would then be used to outline the zoning of Croydon</p> <p>3.5 The intention is to have the new service in place shortly, but if the contract has to be taken to tender, this may take an additional 2-3 months.</p> <p>Q1: FR: In regards to a locality model, are there any disadvantages of adopting this? Such as a disparity between the areas in Croydon. A1: AD: We are going to have to conduct investigations as to whether there is potential for children to receive provisions in an alternative locality</p> <p>3.6 There is a risk with using a lead provider as they will likely look to marginalize any financial gain. There is potential to generates issues similar to that which we are currently experiencing.</p> <p>3.7 Frustration was voiced by the headteachers in relation to how long this has gone on for. SD explained that we are having to look at things differently and illustrate potential options and how they will be affected going forwards.</p>	
4	Special School Budget	CQ
	<p>4.1 CQ gave a verbal update on the Special School Budget for which a paper should follow in due course. Having reached year end, we are aware that the areas of concern are special schools and SENIF funding of which we need to be mindful of in the future. Additionally, there will be focus on the payments for independent, Early Years Locality and out of borough pupils.</p> <p>Q2: FR: At the Special Heads meeting, the funding sheets were received late which is becoming a habit. A sum of money did come into the account, but without the sheets, it's difficult to explain it to the account managers. A2: CQ: There will be assurance that these will come out as soon as possible in future. There is potential to get these out earlier in either January or February, but this requires numbers to be received ahead of schedule too.</p> <p>4.2 JE also agreed that the delayed funding sheets means that they are without information that is important where setting budgets is concerned.</p> <p>4.3 KR added that we need to be aware that there were and are still placement negotiations in discussion for September 2024. Regarding SENIF, there is a discussion for Early Years support to be incorporated into the Locality.</p> <p>4.4 CQ wanted an action point to be recorded whereby schools would get their funding figures sooner following confirmed and validated figures.</p> <p>4.5 CQ added that we also appear to be meeting our safety valve targets and voiced appreciation for the headteachers' continued support and hard work.</p>	
5	CLSS & Early Years Impact Update	KC
	<p>5.1 KC presented in place of MS who was unable to attend the working group.</p> <p>5.2 Slide 2 showed the present structure of CLSS and the 9 localities that make up Croydon, for which shows we are working with settings from Early Years up to secondary schools. SD emphasised that it is not nursery schools, but nursery classes being supported within the CLSS.</p> <p>5.3 The CLSS currently supports a number of CYPs through a variety of methods. For example, 2,174 CYPs are supported without direct funding (advice, signposting and free resources) whereas 848 are supported with CLSS funding for a fixed period of time and then continue with school SEND support. A graph and pie chart followed to depict the percentage of CLSS average outcomes clearly.</p>	

	<p>5.4 There are a couple of budget issues such as salaries, the roll-out and accruals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salaries – The budget was written for two part time ASLs (0.6fte), there are now three F/T ASLs - Roll-out – The historical budget line has not always reflected the roll out of CLSS from 4 localities to 9 - Accruals - The out- turn suggests that some settings have spent significantly more than the locality funding allocated to them in the FY 2023/24. We suspect that this is due to accruals from 2022/23. <p>Q3: CQ: How do we make sure the invoices won't continue to come in from accruals of 2022/23?</p> <p>A3: KC: As we have only just been made aware of this situation recently, we can only analyse the current set and see the anomalies within the funding. We are continuing to have meetings with headteachers, SBMs and SENCOs to ensure that processes are maintained and enforced.</p> <p>5.5 DMI added that there should be an emphasis on one team and one system for the data to be inputted onto Synergy. That way, we can then review previous payments and forecasting, even cross checking the whole system.</p> <p>Q4: SD: Are we clawing back in areas where there has been double funding or at least the potential for it?</p> <p>A4: KC: Previously, that could have happened. However, EHCP funding will only start once the CLSS funding has ended.</p> <p>Q4: JE: If intervention takes place and is then subsequently maintained within the school, is there a follow up period?</p> <p>A4: KC: The team reviews cases regularly to ensure that support is still available at a locality level.</p> <p>5.6 As there are some concerns and issues relating to SENIF funding, there is also potential for a small working group to be set up relating to SENIF.</p>	
6	Supported Internship Update	EW
	<p>6.1 EW provided the working group with an update on the Supported Internship programme which is part of a national programme funded by the DfE that will be in place by September '24.</p> <p>6.2 The aim of the programme is to improve the employment rates for adults with learning disabilities as Croydon has a low percentage. There would be a work based study programme for the duration of one year with a targeted outcome of paid employment. This would be co-ordinated by a SEND Employment Forum</p> <p>6.3 It is designed for ages 16-25 with additional learning needs and an EHCP who are committed to getting a job.</p> <p>6.4 The council have been granted funding over three years and that has helped to set up the Employment forum.</p> <p>6.5 The long term goal of the scheme is to double the number of supported internship by March '25. There is also an action plan in place to ensure that a pathway can be established from the supported internship through to a future employment opportunity.</p>	
7	AOB	ALL
	7.1 No AOB noted	

AGREED ACTIONS

Actions from previous minutes		
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Next Meeting Date – September/October TBD

DRAFT