

Minutes - Sheffield Schools Forum

3.00-5.00pm, 28 June 2022, via Microsoft Teams

Chair: Keith Crawshaw

Schools Forum Members:

Primary Heads Representatives

Nigel Brooke-Smith (Greystones)
Paul Stockley (Bradway)
Vacant Seat

Primary Governors

Alison Warner (Grenoside)

Secondary Head

Linda Gooden (King Edward VII)

Non-school Members

Mo Andrews, Pye Bank CE Primary
Stephen Betts, Learn Sheffield
Karen Simpkin, Early Years providers
Toby Mallinson/Lisa Smith, Trade Unions
Vacant Seat, 14-19 Sector

Academies

Keith Crawshaw (Sheffield South East Trust)
David Dennis (Tapton)
Jim Dugmore (Oughtibridge)
Chris French (Mercia Learning Trust)
Stacy McKay (Springs Academy)
Morag Somerville (Steel City Schools Partnership)

Special Academies

Joel Hardwick (Nexus Multi-academy Trust)

Special Schools

Laura Gillespie, Governor (Bents Green)
Sacha Schofield, Head (Bents Green)

PRU

Alan Richards (Sheffield Inclusion Centre)

Apologies: Mo Andrews, Stephen Betts, Chris French, Laura Gillespie, Linda Gooden, Karen Simpkin, Mark Sheikh, Lisa Smith, Paul Stockley, Alison Warner, Kim Wilson

Also in attendance: Cllr Dale, Co-Chair for the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee; Amanda Murray, Education and Skills (notes); Andrew Jones, Director, Education and Skills; Helen Mansfield, Resourcing Manager, Education and Skills

Presenters: Jacky Beatson, Resourcing Manager, Education and Skills; Louise Bower, Service Manager, MAST; Paul Johnson, School Food and Transport Service Manager, Education and Skills; Candi Lawson, Strategic Commissioning Manager; Simone Palmer, Service Manager, MAST; Mark Storf, Assistant Director, Early Help and Safeguarding Hub,

Observers: Patrick Grant, DfE

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Introductions were made and apologies noted as above. No declarations of interest were made.

2. Previous meeting minutes/matters arising

Agreed as a true and accurate record. Updates regarding actions as follows:

- It was confirmed that providers can claim for children who have missed claims for Disability Access Funding (DAF) from previous years.
- Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) capacity and sufficiency plan - meetings have taken place to discuss this and an update will be brought back to September Forum.
- The maximum permitted movement of funds between DSG blocks was confirmed as 0.5% from the Schools Block to other blocks.

3. Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) and Central Services Schools Block (CSSB) - update

Mark Storf presented the paper along with input from Simone Palmer and Louise Bower:

- The report provides an update on the CSSB historic funding provided to MAST and the support for the Prevention and Early Intervention strategy – the support and advice available, and highlights how resources are used.
- The attached leaflet outlines key developments.
- Data for the academic year is included in section 4 and this includes 4,260 children who have been screened by the Safeguarding Hub after contact from schools.
- The team is currently in discussion with Tim Armstrong regarding attendance levels.
- The MAST team is dedicated to improving outcomes for children and support includes:
 - The facility for schools to make referrals.
 - Whole family work - Team around the Family (TAF) and the Team Around the School model.
 - Access to the online training offer
- Schools should have received an open case list.

Additional Forum discussion raised the following points:

- It was clarified where it was labelled that schools have 'no MAST worker' that this is where there is currently a vacancy.
- Forum members welcomed the report and appreciated the hard work.
- The work is evaluated by the Council's Performance and Analysis Service and we are currently meeting 100% of Government targets.
- We have been reviewing the Intervention and Early Help provision and recognise the need to improve and are therefore developing an impact dashboard.
- The key challenge facing the sector is increasing demand.
- We can measure the success of embedding the process in schools and will start capturing action planning advice sessions data.
- Tiering and threshold of need is currently under review.
- Forum members are invited to contact mark.storf@sheffield.gov.uk or louise.bower@sheffield.gov.uk if they wish to be involved in the work of the Steering Group.

The Forum:

- **Noted** the update provided.
- **Endorsed** the leaflet, but suggested that thought be given as to the audience.

- **Requested** that consideration be given to how the team communicates with governors and parents about what MAST does and to give thought about how they engage with the wider school community

4. Locality SEND Funding Review Update

Candi Lawson highlighted the following points from the report:

- The review was requested by Education and Skills to look at how Element 3 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding is allocated to schools and is intended to improve provision in mainstream and ensure that statutory duties are met.
- The Forum previously agreed an investment of £1.5m into locality funding to increase capacity.
- A multi-agency steering group has been set up and works within the following principles: consistency, timeliness, targeted, accountability and adaptability.
- The paper takes account of the intent for funding to change nationally.
- Section 2 of the paper updates on the progress of a banded resource allocation system (RAS) for Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and locality systems to support children with SEN support needs.
- The diagram shows the three-year plan and breaks it down by interim and longer-term objectives.
- The proposal for the next academic year is that all schools will receive an initial SEND high needs funding allocation based on the Sheffield Support Grid at the beginning of the year. Where provision is not covered by the notional and initial high needs funding allocation, schools can request additional funding via panels. The aim being to balance speed with targeting funding. There will also be emergency funding set aside.
- Section 5 sets out the additional investment required if we are to meet the needs of SEND children in mainstream.

Forum discussion included the following:

- David Dennis felt that the update was a positive step, but had concerns about equity across settings and for the needs of children and young people; and also queried how we will report on the impacts of implementation:
 - Localities are committed to equity and there will be a standard electronic system for EHCPs that will ensure consistency and we must ensure that the funding and provision is available. Localities' allocations to schools will be subject to audit. SEND Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SENDSARS) managers will work in localities to help ensure consistency. Moderation will be discussed with the Inclusion Taskforce.
 - Implementation will be via the SENDSARS team and we are currently reviewing capacity.
- To ensure the process is shared transparently with the sector.
- We are working with locality heads to ensure consistency in running the panels and applying criteria.
- Schools will need to demonstrate how funding has been spent on provision.
- There is pressure in the system due to families wanting the legal documentation provided by an EHCP, but there is a lack of flexibility between mainstream and special schools – to consider if the RAS can re-open the route back to mainstream. Candi explained that the RAS will determine the band for children with EHCPs and it might not guarantee additional funding for schools – we therefore need a clear strategy for SEN support (not just for those with EHCPs).

Action: Candi and Joel Hardwick to discuss the above and dual placements in more detail.

- The RAS will ensure consistency at the child level and the locality will receive an allocation for strategic work which can be spent at their discretion to ensure we balance consistency with innovation.
- Candi is happy to visit localities as required to discuss this further.

The Forum noted and acknowledged the progress – the interim developments made to the funding model and the initial work to adopt a RAS; and emphasised the need to communicate effectively to governors/trustees and parents.

5. Falling Rolls Policy Update

Jacky Beatson summarised the paper as follows:

- The policy was introduced last September to support schools in retaining staff with falling rolls due to the falling birth rate.
- The policy is to be reviewed annually and there are no changes proposed for 2022/23.
- We top-sliced £250k from the Growth Pot to fund this
- Schools were provided with a data pack and were RAG-rated based on surplus places; with the School Organisation Team offering individual meetings if required.
- The financial support is subject to meeting criteria: only three schools applied for this support, and all were unsuccessful due to having surplus balances of over 8%.
- Some schools had problems with mobility issues and were signposted to the Mobility Factor in the funding formula.

The Forum noted the policy review, that no claims were made and the outturn position of £250k.

6. Growth Funding

Jacky Beatson highlighted key points from paper 6:

- The available growth funding for planned basic need growth and new schools has reduced to £1.61m in 2022/23.
- We have a total of £811k of planned growth/post opening cost payments as per appendix 1.
- The Department for Education (DfE) has reiterated that schools need to use any surplus balances.
- The Growth Policy has been aligned with the Falling Rolls Policy.

It was clarified that:

- Awkward year group funding aims to fill the shortfall between the group size and/or member of staff and is provided pro-rata.

The Forum:

- **Noted** the reduction in growth funding.
- **Agreed** to continue to use the updated growth funding policy for 2022/23.

- **Agreed** the planned growth/post opening funding payments of £811k as per Appendix 2.
- **Agreed** that school balances be considered prior to funding Growth claims, in line with the Falling Rolls policy.

7. Schools White/Green Papers

Further to the summary on the White Paper provided; Andrew Jones highlighted key points regarding both the White and Green Papers.

- Cllr Dale will be formally responding to the Green Paper.
- The proposal is for a full academy system by 2030.
- There are ambitious GCSE grade targets.
- There is an emphasis on professional development, also targeted support.
- There are shifts in powers for local authorities – strengthened in some instances and removed in others.
- There is an aim to simplify the EHC process and a focus on qualifications for staff working in SEND.
- Alternative provision will be formalised, and this is significant for Sheffield.
- There is a greater focus on accountability.

Additional Forum comments included:

- The Chair felt that the Early Years sector was not being considered as seriously as it should be in the Green and White papers, especially when considering the primary targets stated.
- There is a pledge regarding interventions if a child falls behind, but there will be funding implications which are not clear.
- There will be challenges for single school academies.
- The Paper makes reference to academy trusts not having too much influence in one locality/area and this will need to be considered.
- The continued transition to the National Funding Formula will mean less Forum involvement in decisions in the future.

8. Catering Contract: School Meal Pricing

Paul Johnson summarised the update on pricing and options to consider:

- We are moving to the second year of the contract with Taylor Shaw.
- The primary contract meal price has risen by 15p and 14p in secondary for 2022/23 and this is still cheaper than the previous contract cost.
- The cost to KS2 parents has been fixed at £2 since 2016.
- The paper highlights the options for meeting the price increase.
- Forum members were asked to consider the options and whether they felt wider consultation was required.

Additional Forum discussion can be summarised as follows:

- It was clarified that schools are charged on an annual basis and there is additional money available to cover eventualities.
- Option one (price remains the same to parents) was the preferred option, but given that some Forum representatives were absent from the meeting, members supported the suggestion of wider consultation to gain feedback from schools, localities and families.

- The cost of card transactions was queried – schools can pay the contractor directly with no additional charge, but a fee would be incurred if the payment was made via other providers.

Action: Paul Johnson to write to heads and chair of governors (all schools, not just those in the contract) before the end of term.

9. School Balances Update

This paper is an update for information only and further information will be brought back to the September meeting.

10. Forum Constitution and Membership

The Chair drew attention to:

- The review of the constitution document which remains unchanged.
- The recent elections for members where terms have expired:
 - Chris French and Keith Crawshaw have now been elected for a further term to represent academies.
 - The primary elections for the vacant seat will be decided by 30 June.
- The request for members to consider expressing an interest in the role of Chair.

11. AOB

The Chair proposed, and members agreed, that the next meeting of the Forum should be held face-to-face.

Date of next meeting: 29 September 2022, 3.00-5.00pm, venue TBC