

**EDUCATION SEND GROUP
REPORT TO FORUM
FOR PRESENTATION
AT FORUM ON 19 May 2021**

Date of Virtual meeting: 13 May 2021 - Brief Summary of Items Discussed

- **Matters' Arising** – Despite some loosening in the Covid guidance, face to face interactions with community therapists are still not taking place. Covid and staff recruitment difficulties have exacerbated waiting times for assessments through the SAS service, which now stand at 80 weeks.
- **SEND Funding** - The 2020-21 year-end accumulated deficit stands at £9.1m, an increase of £3.1m over the previous year. The Authority awaits the Government's SEND Review, promised for Spring 2021; it is clear that, nationally, additional HN funding is needed in the system. In the meantime, it is expected to be a few years before Solihull sees the financial benefits from the range of planned improvements to the service.
- **Out-of-Borough Payments to Independent and Private Providers** - Data showed an increase of 20 pupils placed in the period November 2020 to March 2021, at an additional cost of £204k. The majority of new placements relate to a cohort of children identified as being without a named school, some of whom were not receiving any education.
- **START Team Update** – The service has been split into three teams, each concentrating on a particular area of new assessments and annual reviews. The number of assessments processed within the statutory 20 week timescale has increased from 21% in January to 70%. New areas of data collection are being introduced and a review of annual review paperwork is planned.
- **Commissioning Arrangements for Independent and Private Providers** - Darren Jakeways presented the new arrangements. These include contracts with private providers where there are existing placements, individual placement agreements for individual learners to ensure progress is being made and a provider map to ensure the service has the latest Ofsted ratings, class sizes, what needs can be met etc. for all schools we are placing with. In time, these arrangements will be extended to other providers, eg. Early Years, Alternative Provision.
- **High Needs Development Plan** - Charlotte Jones provided an update on some of the work taking place, including:
 - Work in place for children not attending school for a significant period of time.
 - The Joint Additional Needs Board's work on the SEND Strategy and broadening this out to include all children with additional needs.
 - Workshops taking place to move forward the Inclusion Strategy alongside the Graduated Approach work as a single inclusive process within the school system.
 - Improved communications through the SEND Newsletter and greater use of the schools' Extranet.
 - Further staff investment, including recruitment of a Tribunal Officer.
- **Reshaping Education** - The Reshaping Consultation closes on 28 May. There will be a lot of changes, including the creation of an Inclusion team and bringing together the two Early Years teams. Some changes will be implemented before the end of the academic year, with new ways of working starting from September.
- **Alternative Provision Strategy** - Michele Sadler is working on a strategy to bring coherence to Solihull's AP service, to determine the gaps, identify what the offer needs to be and specify how provision can be accessed. MS will canvass the views of Solihull's providers and schools to clarify what is needed, with the timeline of taking a Strategy to Cabinet Member in September.

Full minutes of the meeting can be requested from Ali McWilliam amcwilliam@solihull.gov.uk

LM/AMc/18.5.21