

**EDUCATION SEND GROUP
REPORT TO FORUM
FOR
17 January 2022
FORUM MEETING**

Date of Virtual meeting: 2 December 2021 - Brief Summary of Items Discussed

- **Matters' Arising** – A number of updates were provided, including confirmation that Primary and Secondary EHCP Panel meetings will, from January 2022, take place on Tuesday mornings and afternoons respectively; the Statutory Assessment Service's waiting time now stands at 91 weeks/593 children, although progress is being made – vacant posts have now been appointed to and a private company has been commissioned to undertake around 100 assessments. EdSEND will continue to receive updates on progress.
- **Task and Finish Groups Update** – Three T&F Groups have been in place focusing on: **reducing violent incidents in schools** – focus is on supporting the wellbeing of HTs and school staff and robust training on how to manage incidents; **reviewing Annual Review paperwork** – work is now complete and updated paperwork is being circulated to schools and **HN provision for early years children** – where the focus is being narrowed and an Action Plan drawn up.
- **High Needs Funding (Steve Fenton)** – At Period 7, spend continues to be largely on budget, with a projected year-end overspend of £2.9m. Independent Placement Costs for both colleges and schools showed little movement from September, but costs are likely to have increased by the next meeting.
- **Community Therapists Coming into Schools (Nicky Thomas/NHS)** – NT presented some data and explained the difficulties paediatric therapy services are experiencing with staff recruitment, retention and sickness. Members raised a number of questions, which largely linked to delays in the service and perceived lack of communication. There are some positive actions in the pipeline – a speech and language training package co-produced with schools, due out shortly and the potential for open sessions for parents waiting for initial therapy appointments, to give them useful hints and tips whilst they wait.
- **Post-14 Health Care Checks for Young People with Learning Difficulties and Autism (Tom Parker/NHS)** – TP shared a Powerpoint presentation aimed at raising awareness of and encouraging families to take up the checks, which are currently delivered by GPs. Members agreed to share the message, but it was noted that it continues to be problematic to access GP surgeries and, particularly considering the cohort of children, it would be beneficial for other paediatric practitioners to carry out the checks at the same time as other regular appointments.
- **SEND Improvement Plan, Financial Plan and Support for Children and Young People with Additional and Special Needs (Charlotte Jones)** – CJ presented a range of reports and appendices which will be presented to Full Cabinet on 9 December. Reports covered a number of documents previously shared with EdSEND and other groups. CJ stressed that it is no longer a feasible concept for the LA to recover the accumulated HN deficit and that improvement work will not reduce costs. However, placement and financial forecasting, based on increased in-borough places and continued additional Government funding, has projected that by the end of 2024-25, Solihull could be in an in-year break even position. Alongside this, the SEND Review, expected Spring 2022, may bring about significant changes which will be explored when the details are available.
- **SISS 2020-21 Annual Report (Paula Thompson)** – The report was received with no questions raised.

LM/AMc
8.12.21

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