

Durham County Council Schools Forum Meeting, 10 July 2024, Item No 3, Outstanding Action Points

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To list action points from previous meetings, including outstanding and recently completed actions.
- 2 Action points are shown below, including a reference to the minutes where the action was identified. Completed actions will be included in the report, for information, for six months after completion.

Contact

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Agenda item	Action & responsible	Progress	Status
23 November 2023, Item No 8, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Forecast of Outturn 2023 24	Further consultation will take place with all special school headteachers in in January 2024 to go through this in more detail. Martyn Stenton/Paul Shadforth	Meeting did not take place, and to be rescheduled (minutes of March 2024 meeting, paragraph 9) Meeting arranged for 14 th May.	Closed, to remain on action point list until after September 2024 meeting.

Agenda item	Action & responsible	Progress	Status
26 March 2024, Item No 7, HNB funding and SEND and Inclusion Update	Wider consultations on HNB review to take place in the near future. Martyn Stenton	On agenda for June meeting	Closed , to remain on action point list until after November 2024 meeting (or January 2025 if changes agreed).
26 March 2024, Item No 7, HNB funding and SEND and Inclusion Update	Modelling of a transfer from of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block will be provided to Members at the meeting in June 2024. David Watchman	On agenda for June meeting	Closed , to remain on action point list until after November 2024 meeting (or January 2025 if changes agreed).
26 March 2024, Item No 10, Other Updates (verbal)	Further information on future meeting dates to be provided at the June meeting. David Shirer	On agenda for June meeting	Closed , to remain on action point list until after November 2024 meeting (or January 2025 if changes agreed).

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<p>27 September 2023, Item No 8, HNB Funding and SEND and Inclusion Update</p>	<p>Request for an analysis of the cost of tribunals. Sandra expressed concern on what is the point of the decision for EHCPs being overturned if they have been refused in the first place.</p> <p>Paul Shadforth</p>	<p>Update provided in November 2023 by Paul Shadforth:</p> <p>Refusal of statutory assessments was 49% in 2019 and 12% in 2022. The average is now 23%, equal to 191 refusals, because of an increase in the number of assessment requests.</p> <p>When a statutory assessment is refused a parent may appeal. The initial decision may be overturned without going through the dispute process. Most cases will be overturned and a statutory needs assessment will take place.</p> <p>Paul is not aware of any statutory assessment refusals that have got as far as court proceedings in the last year. There would be no legal costs as it would be a member of the casework team who attend court.</p> <p>Dr Sandra Whitton said that parents believe that when they appeal the decision will automatically be overturned. Sandra explained the importance of</p>	<p>Closed , to remain on action point list until after September 2024 meeting.</p>

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		<p>transparency for schools which would help when headteachers are having conversations with parents.</p> <p>Sandra raised the issue of actual costs, the amount of time in working through the appeals and how it can be difficult for schools to get in contact with SEND colleagues if they are all busy with appeals. Sandra said clarity around this would be appreciated if this is not the case.</p> <p>Paul Shadforth to provide members with further clarity on the procedure so schools are fully aware. [ACTION]</p> <p>Update provided in November 2023 by Paul Shadforth:</p> <p>It is not possible to quantify the time and cost associated with Dispute Resolution as the work is spread throughout the team with Caseworkers being the first point in trying to find a resolution, then Casework Managers. If a case is lodged at tribunal then the coordination of the appeal response is performed by our Specialist Dispute Resolution</p>	

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		<p>Managers. Each case requires a bespoke response so working back through the costs associated would be a challenge.</p> <p>Paul also advised that more work is being undertaken about developing a shared expectation on positive communication.</p>	
<p>23 November 2023, Item No 8, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Forecast of Outturn 2023 24</p>	<p>Further information to be provided about the use of the High Needs capital allocations.</p> <p>Paul Shadforth</p>	<p>Update provided in March 2024 by Paul Shadforth:</p> <p>Work has been undertaken to provide additional space at Durham Trinity and Croft special schools.</p> <p>A more comprehensive update will be provided to a future meeting</p>	<p>Open, update to be provided to future meeting</p>
<p>23 November 2023, Item No 10, Special School Funding 2024-25</p>	<p>David Watchman to ensure the views of Schools Forum, along with responses from special schools, are shared with the SEND and Inclusion Resources Board when making the final decision on the level of increase</p>	<p>The views of the special schools and the Forum were reported to the SEND and Inclusion Resources Board.</p>	<p>Closed, to remain on action point list until after June 2024 meeting.</p>

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	<p>to special school funding for 2024/25.</p> <p>David Watchman</p>		
27 September 2023, Item No 6, Scheme of Delegation	Scheme of delegation to be updated so that the information is clear in that the Council will be pay for redundancy and early retirement costs in circumstances where changes are required in order to prevent a school going into a deficit.	Revised scheme, including clarity about redundancy and early retirement costs, approved by Forum on 23 November 2023	Closed, to remain on action point list until after June 2024 meeting.