

**ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS' FORUM  
FRIDAY 28 APRIL 2023**

**In Attendance:-**

Steve Rhodes – Winterhill (Academy) (in the Chair)  
 Deborah Ball - Treeton Primary (Primary Academy)  
 Lianne Camaish, Aspire  
 Guiseppe DiLasio – Wales (Academy)  
 Chris Eccles – Oakwood (Academy)  
 Lynsey Hadfield – Executive Head, Arnold Nursery (Observer)  
 Neil Hardwick – Head of Finance, CYPS  
 Nathan Heath – Assistant Director of Education, CYPS  
 David Horrigan – Maltby Learning Trust (Primary Academy)  
 Louise Keith – Principal Officer, CYPS  
 Kirsty Peart - Sitwell Infant (Maintained)  
 Colin Price – NEU Representative  
 Steve Scott – Happy Kids (PVI Nursery)  
 Karen Smith – Nexus MAT (Special Academy)  
 Sharon Stones – Head of Arnold Nursery and Children's Centre  
 Nevine Towers – Diocese of Sheffield  
 Pam Ward – Head of Service, Education, CYPS  
 Nathan Williams – Roughwood Primary (Primary Academy)  
 Mark Windle – Badsley Primary (Primary Maintained)

**Apologies were received from:-**

Aileen Chambers, Head of Early Years and Childcare, CYPS  
 Kelly Crompton, CYPS, RMBC  
 Councillor Victoria Cusworth – Cabinet Member for CYPS  
 Julie Day, Head of SEND, CYPS  
 Dr. Spira Deb (PVI Nursery)  
 Andy Krabbendam – CEO JMAT (Academy)  
 Angela McComb – Primary Maintained Governor  
 Alan Richards – Secondary Governor

**105. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to today's meeting and introductions were made.

**106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest reported.

**107. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 13TH JANUARY AND 24TH FEBRUARY, 2023**

Consideration was given to the minutes from the previous meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.

**Agreed:-** That the minutes be approved.

**108. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

**109. MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION OF THE ROTHERHAM SCHOOLS FORUM**

Consideration was given to the membership and constitution of the Schools Forum and the suggested changes for approval.

**Agreed:-** (1) That Nevine Towers move from being a Diocese Representative to a Primary Academy Representative (filling a vacancy) and that a nomination be sought for a further Diocese Representative.

(2) That Paul Wilkinson, Chief Finance Officer – ACET, replace Dominic Curran as Secondary Academy Representative.

(3) That resignations be received from David Naisbitt (Secondary Academy Representative) and Rachael Booth (Special School Representative).

**110. EARLY YEARS - OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Neil Hardwick which detailed the changes proposed in the recent Budget announcement by the Government in relation to Early Years. This included:-

- An extension of the free 30 hour childcare offer.
- An increase in the early education hourly rate.
- A change to the staff:child ratio for 2 year olds.
- Funding to develop 'wraparound' care.
- Incentive payments to new Childminders.

It was also noted that parents who worked more than sixteen hours a week and earned less than £100,000 were entitled to thirty hours of free childcare a week for children aged three to four. In Rotherham this equated to 2,899 children in the Summer term and currently 70% of eligible families were taking up this entitlement.

The entitlement was also being expanded, as detailed in the report, and would be staggered to give childcare providers time to prepare for the changes, ensuring there were enough providers ready to meet demand. The Early Years and Childcare Service was currently carrying out an initial analysis of potential demand as well as a full childcare sufficiency analysis over the summer term.

A number of working parents were currently paying for childcare for children from nine months to two years. To enable providers to operate sustainably, the rate they charged was higher than the early education funding rate. Sustainability would, therefore, be impacted if the proposed increase for September 2023 was not in line with or higher than the current chargeable rates.

The Forum acknowledged that whilst the changes were frustrating it was recognised and analysis would take place in order to align provision and provide clarity longer term.

The changes were, therefore, highlighted to the Forum as the sector would need to expand to meet potential demand.

**Agreed:-** (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That an update report be presented to the Schools Forum when the funding rates have been announced and the interim sufficiency analysis was complete.

## 111. EXCLUSIONS REPORT

Consideration was given to a presentation provided by Nathan Heath (circulated with the agenda papers) which provided a regional and national context on rapidly rising numbers of Exclusions.

The presentation highlighted:-

- Nationally permanent exclusion and suspensions have increased compared to autumn term 2021:-
  - Secondary increase by 16%
  - Primary increase by 70%
  - Special increase by 41%
- Suspensions trend 2016 – 2023
- Permanent Exclusion trend 2016 – 2023.
- Suspensions monthly trend.
- Permanent Exclusion monthly trend.
- Permanent Exclusion Data Autumn Term Comparative.
- Permanent Exclusion Data Spring Term Comparative.
- Early Years and Primary:-
  - Primary Outreach

- LEAF turn around provision developed– SEMH
  - Additional 10 place resource base (EHCP) SLA provision SEMH x2
  - Additional 10 place resource base (EHCP) SLA provision ASD x2
  - Development of family support pilot in KS1
  - Increase in specialist SEMH places for pupils with EHCP
  - Investment in inclusion support grant.
- Secondary:-
    - Secondary Outreach and enhanced transition outreach.
    - Additional resource base provisions KS3/4 (EHCP) SEMH/ASD with SLA x2 for each need type.
    - Aspire dual registration places (in line with recommendations from DfE) as proactive time specific support.
    - Funded early entry college places KS4 from Aspire where appropriate.
    - AP setting professionals to support directly on school sites with small groups low level, persistent behaviour pupils regularly accessing internal exclusion bases.
    - Consideration of AP post 16 offer for Rotherham.
    - Local, written agreement from headteachers for first instance Permanent Excluded pupils to be presented at 'immediate SFAP' to give opportunity of place at a local mainstream upon first Permanent Exclusion, prior to Day 6.
    - Enhancement of managed moves to avoid Permanent Exclusion.
    - Work with Ofsted and DfE to understand differing levels of the use of school exclusion across all schools in the borough.
  - Area Wide:-
    - All school level exclusion data to be shared with Schools Forum.
    - Data pack shared with High Needs sub group for view.
    - DfE SEND Improvement plan enhances the role of AP and drives the need for system ownership.
    - Relationship between SEND, Vulnerability, and school exclusion.
    - Continued development of outreach across all areas of SEND.
    - Extend role of the virtual school.

Forum Members welcomed the information and in receiving the content highlighted the challenges being faced.

Discussion ensued about locally agreed managed moves and alternative options. Whilst there was no statutory requirement for a collaborative agreement the offers amongst schools was disproportionate. Clear written agreements needed to be in place in relation to managed moves,

places becoming permanent, funding arrangements and opportunities to use Fair Access with recurrent challenges.

Concern was also expressed about the Local Authority's capacity to support primary excluded children, which was increasing with behaviour becoming more challenging and more so post-pandemic.

Whilst it was acknowledged the Green Paper would alleviate some difficulties, challenges would remain for some permanently excluded children returning to mainstream education. Significant challenges had been identified with growth of children permanently excluded in Key Stage 3.

The pandemic had masked some of the issues being faced, but consideration needed to be given to the Key Stage 3 offer for permanently excluded children's onward destinations.

Discussion ensued on the bulge years through Key Stage 3 and the vigilance required through Early Years into Key Stage 1 aligning to practice and consistency of decisions. Provision needed to be shaped with clearer analysis of challenges meetings the needs of students through primary years into secondary.

As part of the Improvement Plan and direction of travel there needed to be a collective understanding and a moral accountability position to sustain provision with inclusion of wider services for attendance pathways.

The Local Authority did meet with the Department for Education on a regular basis and discussion did take place about inclusion/exclusion services.

More detailed analysis should, therefore, also take place of the data that was available to look how information was triangulated and children's journeys mapped. This would be included for consideration by the High Needs Sub-Group to look at systemic changes and any relevant case studies.

**Agreed:-** (1) That the presentation be received and the contents noted.

(2) That an update be provided to a future meeting on the Fair Access Protocol.

(3) That exclusion data be included for consideration by the High Needs Sub-Group.

## 112. UPDATE ON SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS

Consideration was given to the report by Neil Hardwick, Head of Schools Finance, which built upon previous reports setting out the main amendments to the Scheme for Financing Schools to bring in line with

the DfE's latest version, updated as of 31st March, 2023.

**Agreed:-** (1) That the report be received and the updates to the Scheme for Financing Schools sections highlighted in yellow be noted.

(2) That the DfE's latest version, updated 31 March 2023 be noted.

(3) That the Updated Scheme for Financing Schools be disseminated to schools.

**113. UPDATE ON HIGH NEEDS BLOCK (HNB) OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE 2022/2023**

Consideration was given to the report presented by Neil Hardwick, Head of Schools Finance, which set out the main update to the 2023/24 High Needs Operational Guidance and proposed recommendations to ensure compliance and financial sustainability.

There were changes to the 2023 to 2024 high needs funding system with the NFF and underpinning operational processes and principles remaining largely unchanged from 2022 to 2023. The ESFA had also clarified certain aspects of the guidance and the relevant updates since the August 2022 publication.

**Agreed:-** (1) That the update to the 2023/2024 High Needs Operational Guidance be received and noted.

(2) That the guidance update and 2023-2024 funding allocations be noted.

**114. SAFETY VALVE**

Further to Minute No. 95 of the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 consideration was given to an update from Nathan Heath, Assistant Director for Education, on the High Needs Safety Valve arrangements aligned to the Local Authority's trajectory.

An update had been provided for the Cabinet at its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 where it was confirmed that regular monitoring had taken place with meetings between DfE and the Council on a quarterly basis to both support delivery and hold accountability of the Agreement. Further updates would be provided in due course.

This support and challenge process also allowed emerging challenges to be shared and a vigorous oversight of plans to be undertaken. Rotherham had remained on track to deliver all aspects of its 'Safety Valve' agreement across this financial year.

The Dedicated Schools Grant deficit position would have moved from a position of £12.84m at the end of 2021/2022 to a forecast outturn position of £6.49m at the end of 2022/2023 and an update on the current financial

position was provided.

The High Needs Sub-Group would continue to receive regular and detailed updates in relation to the 'Safety Valve Agreement'.

**Agreed:-** That the update be received and the contents noted.

**115. UPDATE FROM HIGH NEEDS SUB-GROUP INCLUDING NOTIONAL SEN**

Consideration was given to an update by Nathan Heath, Assistant Director for Education, on the discussions arising from the High Needs Sub-Group, much of which remained confidential due to the content of the information shared about the Safety Valve Arrangements.

Details of the discussions were outlined.

Future agenda items would look at activity that supported wider contexts.

**Agreed:-** That the update be received and the contents noted.

**116. TEACHERS AND NJC PAY AWARDS**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**117. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other items of business to report.

**118. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Agreed:-** That the next meeting of the Schools' Forum take place on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2023 at 8.30 a.m. at Rockingham Professional Development Centre.