

Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: January 2016
Subject: High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Contracts for Services that Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Report of: Director of Children’s Services

Summary: This report sets out the SEND contracts funded by the High Needs Block and provides feedback agreed by the High needs Block Technical Sub Group regarding contracts that will need to be varied in terms of contract price for 2016/2017.

Contact Officers: Helen Redding, Assistant Director School Improvement

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the Schools Forum consider the update regarding central spend on High Needs Block funded contracts, and comments on actions being taken following Technical Sub Group Meetings to inform variation to contracts if required in 2016/2017.**

Background

1.	The Schools forum powers and responsibilities 2015 to 2016 were amended in March 2015 and now include additional functions in relation to the High Need Block as set out in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4.
2.	<p>The Local Authority must consult annually and ask the Schools Forum for a view on financial issues relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for pupils with SEN, in particular the places to be commissioned by the Local Authority and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding; • Arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding. <p>The Schools Forum should inform governing bodies of all consultations</p>
3.	The Local Authority can propose and the Schools Forum decides on central spend on special education needs transport costs. The DfE adjudicates where schools forum does not agree the Local Authority proposal.

4.	The Local Authority decides central spend on children and young people with high needs. The Schools Forum has no powers or responsibilities in relation to this, but it is good practice to inform the forum.
5.	At the Schools Forum meeting of 26 January 2015 the complexity of services and functions supported by High Needs Block was recognised and it was agreed to set up a High Needs Block Technical Sub Group. Terms Of Reference were agreed at the next Schools Forum Meeting on 15 June 2015. School Forum Members who put themselves forward for this group were Shirley Crosbie, Sue Howley, Sarah Mortimer, Peter Cohen, John Street, David Brandon-Bravo and Ali Brabner. Convenient dates for members could not be identified in the summer term, and so the group has met twice since September 2015. It is meeting again in February 2016.
6.	The contracts were considered at the High Needs Block Technical Sub Group at their meeting on 7 December 2015. The contract monitoring reports were shared and the data on caseloads considered
7.	The planned central spend in 2015/2016 as set out in the 26 January 2015 High Needs Block Report on the following contracts which provide services to schools and families was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Peripatetic Service for Children and Young People with Hearing Impairments (£195,000); • The Peripatetic Service for Children and Young People with Visual Impairments (£252,576); • The Early Years Children With Disability Service (£270,548); • The Medical Needs Service (£643,890); • The Jigsaw Centre (£464,731); • The Academy of Central Bedfordshire (£726,000). <p style="text-align: center;">Total: £2,552,745</p>
Hearing Impairment (HI) Service	
8.	The HI Service has been managed by Harlington Area School Trust (HAST) since 2011. The contract was extended in 2014 to 31 August 2018.
9.	In January 2015 Schools Forum agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) £195,000 centrally retained High needs Block for the peripatetic element of the service to reflect the revised staffing requirements of an additional part time peripatetic teacher and a Speech and Language Therapy Assistant, plus (b) £10,000 plus £12,538 top up per place for 20 places (£22,538) (total £450,760) plus (c) Top-up funding for Central Bedfordshire pupils or vacant places at the Specialist Provision provided by the schools of £2,491 per place for places at Toddington St George, £3,249 per place for pupils at Parkfields and £4,320 per place at Harlington Upper. <p>Parts (b) and (c) are funded through the schools' budgets</p>
10.	In 2011 when the contract was approved there were 81 pupils on the caseload. 21 pupils were in specialist provisions in Toddington St George Lower School, Parkfields Middle School and Harlington Upper School, and 60 pupils were on the peripatetic caseload, of which 9 were of pre school age.
11.	In July 2014 there were 142 pupils on caseload. 55 were classified as having a mild hearing loss, 38 a moderate hearing loss, 11 a severe hearing loss, 4 a profound hearing loss, 12 a unilateral hearing loss, and 3 with statistical anomalies and bilateral perforations.

12.	In July 2015, there were 173 pupils on the caseload. 68 were classified as having a mild hearing loss, 55 a moderate hearing loss, 18 a severe hearing loss, 6 a profound hearing loss, 19 a unilateral hearing loss, and 7 with statistical anomalies and bilateral perforations. 11 of these pupils have cochlear implants. Regularity of monitoring visits is set out in the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) Eligibility Framework.
13.	In addition the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Quality Standards regarding electroacoustic testing of hearing aids in the field are being reviewed following a consultation initiated in July 2015. The current standard sets out that electroacoustic testing of hearing aids should be carried out by the education service every 6 weeks (in between paediatric audiology hearing aid reviews. We are currently unable to meet this standard (although it is understood that other areas are also not meeting this standard). The outcome of this consultation will inform the review of the peripatetic service.
14.	The High Needs Block Technical Sub Group agreed that the Assistant Director School Improvement should work with HAST to review the peripatetic element of the contract for 2016/2017 to reflect the increased caseloads and the NDCS standards. The Autumn 2015 contract monitoring report is expected at the beginning of January and will inform the increased peripatetic requirements.
Visual Impairment (VI) Service	
15.	The Visual Impairment Service has been managed by HAST since January 2014 and will need to be reviewed for 31 August 2018. The contract price was agreed at £252,576.
11.	Caseloads remain at similar levels to the start of the contract when they were at 104, with 18 being babies/pre school age. In the summer term 2015, there were 97 children on caseload with 17 children being under 4 years of age.
12.	Regularity of monitoring visits is set out in the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) Eligibility Framework.
13.	The High Needs Block Technical Sub Group agreed that this contract did not need to be varied.
Early Years Children With Disability Service	
14.	The contract is jointly held by Chiltern Area Special School and Ivel Valley Area Special School. The contract price is currently £270,548.
15.	The numbers on caseload in the 2 areas of Central Bedfordshire that this contract covers have increased significantly but at different rates and mirror the areas of housing growth.
16.	The High Needs Block Technical Sub Group agreed that the Assistant Director School Improvement in discussion with the headteachers from the 2 schools would look to separate the contract into 2 separately costed contracts that reflect the changing demographic and its impact on caseload.
Medical Needs Service	
17.	The Medical Needs Service has been managed by HAST since April 2013. The contract was extended in April 2015 until 31 August 2018 and the contract price was amended following Schools Forum in January 2015 to £643,890. This was to reflect the change in requirements of delivery of the service as set out in DfE Guidance.
18.	As at October 2015, caseload was at 50, with 33 of those being in years 10 and 11 and only 1 pupil in the primary years. This is consistent with previous patterns of caseload. 29 pupils have mental health difficulties.

19.	It is usual for caseloads to increase across a school year and we are expecting an updated performance report early in January 2016.
20.	Pupils who are signed off from school due to their medical needs now fall under the remit of the Revised SEND Code of Practice (2015) where appropriate. Some of these pupils may undergo an Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessment.
21.	The High Needs Block Technical Sub Group has requested a break down of the needs identified under the heading 'Mental Health'.
22.	Contract Monitoring reports to not indicate a requirement to review this contract at the present time.
Jigsaw Centre	
23.	The Jigsaw Centre contract was one of the first service contracts to be awarded, and in January 2015 the Schools Forum agreed to amend the contract price from £414,645 to £464,731 in line with the methodology used to calculate more recent contract prices. An error in this calculation was identified in 2015, and this was corrected to £477,331.
24.	Contract monitoring reports demonstrate a significant increase in caseload for early intervention work, but also an increase in the number of children requiring placement at the Centre itself.
25.	The Assistant Director School Improvement has met with the Steering Committee and the new Headteacher who starts on 1 January 2016. It was agreed that the service should look at staffing structures and income generation to inform future contract price.
26.	This information will be brought back to the High Needs Block Technical Sub Group and inform a further update paper for the march Schools Forum meeting.
Academy of Central Bedfordshire (ACB)	
27.	Demand for Group 1 places (commissioned by the Local Authority) at the ACB continues to be high which has led to the need to commission an additional 10 places for the Autumn and Spring term 2015 at a cost of £76,271 (although the cost of a place is £10k per place plus top up of £8005, £4,930 of the top up is transferred from the schools). This is being reviewed for Spring term as admissions are still increasing.
28.	There are still significant numbers of students going to the ACB who require an EHC Assessment. The Governing Body of the ACB which comprises of all the secondary and upper heads plus a middle school head representative have been reminded that the EHC Assessment process should be initiated at the appropriate time for a student, and that the ACB should not be a holding place for students who require more specialist provision.

29.	<p>The ACB is now fully functional as a school, and following discussion at the High needs Block technical Sub Group it is proposed that for Group 1 places it is funded and places planned in the same way as we do for special schools and specialist provisions in mainstream schools. This would mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ACB would receive its place element as it does now from the Education Funding Agency (EFA); • the Local Authority would fund the top up element for its commissioned places at £8005 for group 1 places • The Local Authority would centrally retain the subsidy for Group 2 places and pay this to the ACB, taking into account a reduction that equates to the AWPU allocation moved from schools to the ACB in year.
30.	<p>The Assistant Director School Improvement is having further meetings with the ACB Executive Head in January 2016. This will be modelled and presented to the High Needs Block Technical Sub Group and inform the review of the contract with the ACB.</p>
Conclusion	
29.	<p>The following contracts will be reviewed and updates reported to the Schools Forum in March 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing Impairment Service • Early Years Children With Disability Service • Jigsaw Centre • Academy of Central Bedfordshire

Appendices:

None