

SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT FORUM

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2018, 8:15AM AT ACKLAM GRANGE SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE.

PRESENT:

Andrea Crawshaw (Chair)	-	AGS
Andrew Humble	-	Middlesbrough Council
Faye Revely	-	Middlesbrough Council
William Guthrie	-	PVI
Judith Walls	-	Middlesbrough Council
Helen Steele	-	Caldicotes School
Julia Rodwell	-	Park End Primary
Sarah Lymer	-	Linthorpe Primary
Chris Wain	-	Pallister Park
Gemma Simon	-	Unity City Academy
Trevor Dunn	-	Middlesbrough Council
Jenni Cairns	-	Middlesbrough College
Lindsey Thompson	-	Middlesbrough Council
Caroline Cannon	-	Middlesbrough Council
Trevor Dunn	-	Middlesbrough Council
Janice Brunton Dobson	-	Middlesbrough Council
Helen Malbon	-	Viewley Hill
Beverley Hewitt-Best	-	Newham Bridge
Anita Jeffries	-	Archibald Primary
Nicola Russell	-	Observer
Vanessa Lazenby	-	Observer
Sean Hogg	-	Observer
Lynn Dalby	-	Observer
Vanessa Lazenby	-	Observer
Samantha Corbyn	-	Middlesbrough Council

1. **Apologies for absence**

Amy Young, John Lees, Jane Steel (Jenni Cairns attending), Jackie Walsh, Joanne Smith, David Dawes, Afzal Khushi, Andrew Moores, Jim Farquhar, Andrea William, Helen Watson.

2. **Items for AOB**

None

3. **Minutes and Matters arising from the last meeting**

- Permanent exclusions will no longer be reviewed by AW.
- A letter has been sent about charging.
- A Home and Hospital letter is in the process of being drafted and will be sent after a second meeting in regards to this has taken place in the New Year.

4. Decisions/Action Log

No issues

5. Planned changes to the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus funding for Looked After Children

3 concerns were raised in regards to the Pupil Plus Premium payment devolved to schools being reduced from £1,350 to £1,000:

- The immediacy of the reduction: The reduction will be phased over a 2 year period as detailed in paragraph 3.2. In April 2019 the payment will reduce to £1,150 and to £1,000 from April 2020.
- In schools that have a large number of Looked After Children: There is a strong argument that overall costs will increase for these schools should the Pupil Plus Premium be reduced. Any school with 10+ Looked After Children in any one year will receive the Premium at £1,150.
- DD requested clarification around the reasons for the reduction in payments to schools. These details are presented in the Governing Body Meeting for the Virtual School and Appendix 1 sets out what is retained and how much is devolved. An explanation of planned expenditure of the retained sum is also available – essentially staffing and recurring costs incurred by the Virtual School.

TD requested that the SMF support the above changes.

HS queried why there has been an increase in the Premium and this is not being permeated to schools. How would the Virtual School have handled increasing costs had the above increase not happened?

TD discussed alternative Local Authorities that have a Virtual Head however no underlying Virtual School service. The support provided by the Virtual School would be significantly reduced.

Currently, any therapeutic support that may be required by Looked After Children is funded by the Premium devolved to schools. HS and other members were unaware of central services that can be accessed in regards to therapeutic services without impacting on the devolved Premium. If the Premium was given fully to schools it would not cover the entirety of the cost needed to address some children's issues but does contribute.

It is suggested that the Virtual Head attend cluster meetings so that the Virtual School and educational establishments are not working in isolation. **TD to suggest this.**

Schools are accessing this Premium and funding is being spent. When there is an acute need for involvement the most chronic cases are referred to the Virtual School.

Concerns raised:

- The money not devolved to schools is distributed collectively based on supply and demand. Premiums devolved to schools are spent solely on that child.
- NB stated that services sought externally of the Virtual School have often provided a more effective service.
- Resources are being removed from schools however there has been an increase in Looked After Children.
- Funding will be distributed based on need rather than entitlement.
- When a Looked After Child is removed from a school alternative provision is not always immediately sought but funding is withdrawn.
- Regardless of whether or not SMF agree to the above proposal the Virtual Head is empowered by the Department for Education to progress with the plans.

TD stated that the Local Authority needs to ensure that children with a significant need are addressed effectively. The view for the new funding structure is borough wide. Stripping back the Virtual School would result in a harsh environment in which schools would not have immediate access to SALT or 1-1 support.

PEP's are arranged so that schools and professionals can identify any additional educational support a child may need and this is accessed through the virtual school.

This was disputed as not strictly the case and PEP's cause distress to children with emotional issues due to unfamiliar staff. Schools know their children best and being able to provide support directly would be more appropriate.

AC put the above suggestions to the forum resulting in a unanimous vote against the proposals. Although SMF approval is not required, SMF appreciated the transparency of information provided in regards to Pupil Plus Premium funding and provision offered by the Virtual School and that this transparency will continue.

6. Alternative Provision – School Contributions towards the cost of permanent exclusions and intervention placements

JW outlined the purpose of the report highlighted in paragraph 1.

Paragraph 2 highlights the financial regulations and the decision process for commissioning with external providers to be discussed with the Local Authority.

Financial arrangements have been in place since 2016 and in October 2017 the Department for Education notified the Local Authority of updated early years regulations. No changes were made however the document was made clearer in regards to adjustments.

The Local Authority financial year covers April to March and the school year covers September to August. The Department have made it clear that permanent exclusions adjustments can be made for the remaining part of the Local Authority financial year from the 6th day of exclusion up until the 31st of March that year. If a child is excluded after this date the adjustment can be made up until the 31st of August that year.

Paragraph 2.5 presents the November 2017 report that explains the implications including the amount of Local Authority funding that will be reduced.

It was also agreed in November 2017 that guidance for Early Years regulation would be converted into a daily rate. Minutes need to be clear in this respect as the minutes of the 1st November 2017 meeting do not clearly state this.

Several schools have queried reduced funding – Middlesbrough has moved to a national model which reflects the current school funding situation.

Secondary school children accessing Lingfield Farm will be kept at £40 for the summer term 2018/19 but will increase to £43 from Autumn 2018.

Paragraph 3 provides information regarding the Debt Outstanding and actions taken by officers. Appendix 1 provides details and shows the current debt outstanding is £516,912.73.

A meeting has been arranged to discuss historical invoices of £59,561.08 relating to 3 schools.

Paragraph 4 proposes a system that should be more robust. As soon as data is agreed for an intervention place or permanent exclusion the process will calculate the schools contribution.

Paragraph 4.2 and Appendix 2 details that as at 11 December 2018 the Local Authority is due £624,926 income from this financial year and this is broken down into intervention places and permanent exclusions.

Paragraph 5.4 - Support for the daily rate has been in place since April 2018 and this should be minuted clearly. The daily rate per pupil will increase from £43 to £63 from September 2019.

Paragraph 6 details the recommendations of the report.

AC raised that Appendix 1 appears to display Acklam Grange School having outstanding payments. She clarified that this is not the case and they were queries – one child was unnamed and one child had not been enrolled at AGS since 2016. The report needs to be made clearer as this information is incorrect and inaccurate. The information presented in the report is a matter of public record and this does not reflect well on the Local Authority.

Further concerns were raised that it is unclear how many invalid invoices currently are included and the report appears to mix together invoices that are paid late and on time. The majority of schools pay invoices on time however it would make sense to separate or date them in reports.

Recommendations noted:

- **It is important to understand how much debt is likely to be retrieved and to understand why some schools have agreed to pay only certain amounts.**
- **In the New Year one standard report is to be provided which will detail how much debt is likely to be recovered.**
- **Adjustments to be made to report to highlight those amounts that are really outstanding.**
- **A unanimous agreement of the formal support of the daily rate adjustment.**

7. School Funding 2019/20 – Verbal Update

AH provided a verbal school funding update.

A modelling subgroup is available to attend for all SMF members and business managers to discuss and examine options for the formula. It was agreed that this will take place on Tuesday 8th January 2019, 9am at Acklam Grange School.

Nationally £350m of additional High Needs funding has been announced by the Government. This is made up of an additional £250m into the High Needs Block (£125m 2018/19 and £125m 2019/20). This equates to an additional £336k for Middlesbrough in each year.

It is initially proposed that the current dis-application request submitted to the EFSA to transfer 1% from the schools block to the High Needs Block in 2019/20 is not reduced as the additional funding will not remove the pressure from High Needs. The additional funding does not reduce the need for the recovery plan.

Also a further £100m has been added to the Special Provision Fund to create more specialist places in mainstream schools, colleges

and special schools, including more state-of-the-art facilities, such as sensory rooms and specialist equipment. A submission has been made and a reply will be received shortly.

- Secondary autism provision will be developed.
- Provision for out of area young people will be discussed.
- All bids will be looked at favourably if they make the criteria.
- Alongside this further funding for educational psychologists will be sought.

8. **AOB**

None

9. **Next meeting is to take place at the Community Learning Centre, Wednesday 16th of January 2019: 8:15am.**