

(Draft – Subject to approval at the next meeting of the Schools Forum Working Group.)

**Notes of the Gloucestershire Schools Forum Working Group  
Wednesday 27 November 2019, in the Claydon Suite Board Room, Shire Hall**

**Present members:** Brian Bartlett, Primary School Governor; Colin Belford, Secondary School Headteacher; Elisa Entwistle, Alternative Provision; Andrew Harris, Community Representative (Chair); Kirsten Harrison, Secondary School Headteacher; Lisa Jones, Primary School Headteacher; David Metcalf, Primary School Headteacher; Will Morgan, Secondary School Headteacher; Steve Savory, Primary School Headteacher; Clare Smart, Special Schools Headteacher.

Also in attendance: Paul Holroyd, Secondary School Headteacher; Nick Stanton, Alternative Provision.

**Officers:** Philip Haslett, Head of Education Strategy and Development; Jamie Ford, County Inclusion Development Lead; Neil Egles, Finance Manager, Schools, Strategy and Capital; Joanne Bolton, Democratic Services Adviser and Clerk to the Schools Forum.

**Apologies:** Peter Hales, Primary School Governor; Amanda Horniman, Early Years representative; Sarah Murphy, Trade Unions.

**1. Notes of the previous meetings**

The notes of the previous meetings held on 9 May 2019 and 17 October 2019 were approved as a correct record.

**2. The Service Level Agreement**

2.1 The Group considered the draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Working Guidance for the Secondary Cluster Inclusion Partnership. The SLA sets out the role and responsibilities between Gloucestershire County Council and the schools who constitute Secondary Inclusions Clusters for the funding of behaviour improvement in schools and alternative education where applicable.

2.2 Officers explained that they were working on developing the pilot to test how the Secondary Cluster Inclusion Partnership could operate and how the secondary schools could work together collaboratively. Initial discussions had taken place with all but two of the secondary headteachers and with the pastoral leads. Key themes had emerged from the feedback received and this had assisted in the development of the SLA. Other themes for testing through the pilot had also been identified and were being considered.

2.3 Officers had determined from those discussions that ultimately there was support for the key principles and agreement that funding to support pupils with special educational needs and behavioural issues should be focused at an earlier stage, to reduce the requirement for those students to leave mainstream education.

2.4 Officers explained that KS3 students were only expected to be considered for Higher Alternative Provision in very exceptional circumstances.

2.5 In response to a question, Jamie Ford, County Inclusion Development Lead, explained that as part of the 3-tiered model the expectation was for all schools to provide a baseline support consistent with that of the other schools in their cluster. Members

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emphasised that the definition of the expected baseline needed to be made clear to all schools. A member commented that baseline support provision implied that schools would have access to a range of professional services; schools would need to be able to access this on a timely basis when required.

2.6 A question was asked on who or which services would form the 'Team around the Cluster', and whether there would be any capacity within the system to provide this given how over-stretched the system was. Officers confirmed that discussions were taking place with the relevant teams. An element of pump-priming to rearrange and enhance capacity would be required, the details of which were being worked on. Funding would also become available to finance those support services, following the reduction in permanent exclusions and associated costs, resulting from the new way of working.

2.7 The County Inclusion Development Lead explained that funds would be devolved in several chunks throughout the year to enable review at each stage. Schools would need to sign up to the SLA to have access to the cluster funding. The Group emphasised that the governing body of schools would also need to be signed up to the SLA not just the headteachers.

2.8 Officers were working on how schools could advocate within their local inclusion cluster to decide how best the needs could be met, and to allocate funding and commission services effectively to provide value. The third sector was keen to be involved. It was recognised that schools were in need of increased social care support and consideration would need to be given as this could be provided.

2.9 A member raised concerns in relation to how realistic the proposed timeline of the pilot was when taking into account the associated transitional issues. Officers recognised that it was critical that the resulting model was effective, and that there was a stable transition. It was acknowledged that the pilot may need to start later than planned, and run for an extended period if necessary.

2.10 Elisa Entwistle, Alternative Provision representative, pointed out that the cost of Alternative Provision would need to increase if the number of pupils on roll decreased. She emphasised that under the current timeline there would be a timing issue of when the Alternative Provision Service would know enough about what budget/SLA funding was to be allocated, to be able to plan staffing levels. She commented that if the Alternative Provision service was reduced as a result of less funding, and then the pilot was not successful, the capacity would no longer be available unless it could be guaranteed during the pilot by the service continuing as before with same level of funding.

2.11 In response, the Head of Education Strategy and Development emphasised that ultimately a new way of working was required to improve young people's life chances. The pilot would provide a vast evaluation process on how the new model could work. Officers explained that they were conscious not to over resource the pilot, to avoid the risk of a false result.

2.12 It was noted that Gloucestershire had the highest level of permanent exclusions due to drug and alcohol related incidents than any other authority in the South West. This may be due to Gloucestershire schools enforcing a strict zero tolerance approach. It was also noted that Gloucestershire was the highest permanent excluding authority in the south

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west, but Gloucestershire's figures for fixed term exclusions were low in comparison to others.

2.13 There was recognition that early intervention was the key to preventing an exclusion. Officers acknowledged that there needed to be an improved strategy to allocate funding at an earlier stage, outside of the constrained and expensive Education Health and Care Plan process, such as through a My Plan or a My Plan Plus.

2.14 A member indicated that it would be of value for further data analysis to be undertaken on permanent exclusions, to identify if there were any reasons why the school had not been able to provide the support to prevent the permanent exclusion (e.g. an underlying problem not addressed fully and early enough).

2.15 A member pointed out that the success rate for Managed Moves was just 9%. She emphasised that the Managed Move Protocol required review, schools needed to work collectively and the focus should be looking at whether a Managed Move could be an effective way forward for the child much earlier than currently.

2.16 A member pointed out that the wording in the SLA regarding the responsibility for pupils in elective home education required revision. It currently implied that schools within the cluster would hold the responsibility, whilst the child was still being home educated.

2.17 In response to a question, the County Inclusion Development Lead explained that the Local Authority would appoint the Cluster Strategic Chair and the expectation was that the Chair would be a Locality Inclusion Lead from the Education Inclusion Service. The plan was for the Cluster Strategic Panels to meet at least twice a year, and to have a policy in place for means of communication in exceptional circumstances.

2.18 The Head of Education Strategy and Development informed the Group that work would continue on mapping out the pilot and establishing a more definitive timeline and point of transition. He anticipated there being two pilots in operation - one in Stroud and one in either the Forest of Dean or Cheltenham. At key points in the timeline schools would be asked to provide feedback to enable assessment of whether the pilot was working effectively and achieving its aims. During this period the focus would also be on establishing the future position and funding of Alternative Provision. He encouraged members of the Group to send any further feedback to him via email.

### **3 Funding Formula – Allocation of funding primary/secondary split**

3.1 The Group was informed of the proposals for the funding formula for the Local Inclusion Clusters. The proposed formula to allocate funding between primary and secondary schools involved two key elements:

3.2 The first was the additional needs factors in the National Funding Formula (NFF) (Low Prior Attainment, Deprivation and English as an Additional Language). This identified the incidence of where the pupils were and took into account the NFF value weightings applied to each of the additional needs elements.

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3.3 The second was the average number of permanent exclusions over the last 5 years. This had then been used to obtain a weighting between the sectors that had been applied to uplift the secondary additional needs budgets.

3.4 The Group noted that when applied this formula allocated 29% of funding to Primary and 71% to Secondary.

3.5 The Group indicated approval for the method and percentage allocation between the primary and secondary sectors.

#### **4. Funding Formula – Allocation of funding school/LINC split**

4.1 Officers presented information on a financial model which enabled the assessment of the impact of allocating the funding in the following different ways: - 100% allocation to clusters; 80% to clusters and 20% to schools; 50% to clusters and 50% to schools.

4.2 It was explained that the effects of the different splits would be identified as part of the pilot, to establish and agree a baseline of support provision for additional needs. Members reiterated that this was critical, to ensure consistency of provision across the clusters.

4.3 A question was raised on whether the cluster percentage should be fixed the same for all in that sector or whether each cluster should be able to determine its own split. It was noted that the later would involve a risk of an inconsistent offer being available between the cluster areas.

#### **5. Next meeting**

5.1 The Group would meet again once the pilot projects had concluded to consider the feedback received.

5.2 The focus of the Group in the Spring 2020 would be on developing a new model for using current EHCP funding in a more graduated way to support earlier intervention. A meeting would be arranged in due course.

Ends.