



Department for Education

Date: 23 May 2022

By email: peter.bungard@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Dear Peter,

Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND Programme

I write to thank you for your attendance and input into the DBV strategic sessions that took place in February and March. These gave us valuable feedback on your concerns and how we can work collaboratively with you through the programme to achieve our mutual objective which is to improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and secure the sustainability of your SEND services.

A summary of frequently asked questions from these sessions, grouped into key themes, is attached at Annex A.

Update

I am aware you have been keen for an update following the consultation sessions. We have now completed the procurement of a delivery partner and are currently in contract negotiations with the successful organisation. We are also in the process of setting up the Sector Steering Group (SSG) and, as discussed with you, are working to ensure it has the right representation to ensure concerns and issues you raise are considered as the programme evolves.

You will remember that during the strategic sessions, we mentioned the programme will be phased starting with a first tranche of 20 authorities in June 2022, followed by a second tranche of 20 authorities in autumn (2022) and the third tranche of 15 authorities in spring next year (2023). A full list of participating authorities in each tranche is attached at Annex B. You will note that your authority, Gloucestershire is in tranche 2. In considering authorities for each tranche, we sought to:

- prioritise those with significant deficits;

- ensure a balanced spread of Advisers; and
- take into account specific local authority requests.

Please do let us know, using the inbox address below, if you have any concerns about the tranche your authority is in.

Authorities with a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and/or Accelerated Action Plan (APP) will continue to be able to draw on the suite of support in discussion with their regional teams and SEND Advisers.

For authorities in tranches 2 and 3, the ESFA Local Authority Stakeholder Engagement Team are available to offer support in the form of review of Management Plans prior to authorities commencing work with DBV. As well as one-on-one review and challenge of Management Plans, they will also be holding a series of workshops to cover management of high needs budgets and the use of DSG Management Plans. The ESFA will contact you directly to invite you to one of these sessions. In the meantime, if you have any questions or require support with a DSG Management Plan, please contact Financial.Management@education.gov.uk.

I encourage you to continue in your efforts to address the pressures you are facing prior to commencing with DBV. Within the next month, the Department will publish a guidance with case studies of effective practice in high needs management which I trust will support you in this endeavour.

Next steps

In early June, we will formally announce to the wider sector:

- The launch of the programme including the details of the Delivery Partner who will provide strategic project management and change management services; and
- Membership of the DBV Sector Steering Group (SSG), which will jointly monitor programme delivery alongside the Department, providing regular feedback to the sector, and ensuring appropriate challenge, support and assurance of the programme.

I will write to the 20 local authorities in tranche 1 to begin the onboarding process shortly.

I look forward to working together with you on this programme.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please do send them to DBV.PROGRAMMESUPPORT@education.gov.uk

Fiona Nzegwu

Deputy Director, SEND Improvement and Operations Division