

UPDATE ON HIGH NEEDS RECOVERY PLAN

To: Cambridgeshire Schools Forum

Date: 17th July 2020

From: Toni Bailey/Marian Cullen

Purpose: To provide an update on the work streams in respect of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Recovery Plan.

Recommendation:

Schools Forum is recommended to note and comment on the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 Due to the continuing increase in the number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and the complexity of need of these young people the overall spend on the High Needs Block element of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets has continued to rise. At the end of 2019/20 the High Needs Block overspent by approximately £11.6m. However there were a number of one-off underspends in other areas of the DSG including the Early Years Block which resulted in a net DSG overspend of £9.3m to the end of the year. When added to the existing DSG deficit of £7.2m, this results in a cumulative DSG deficit of £16.6m carried forward into 2020/21.
- 1.2 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) has been responding to these growing pressures through a variety of measures and in June 2019 submitted a Recovery Plan to the Department for Education. The Recovery Plan outlines a number of options that have been identified and discussed with the Schools Forum and aims to reduce the levels of High Needs spend in the coming years.
- 1.3 The SEND Recovery Project Board is responsible for overseeing and driving the delivery of the required savings within the SEND service and ensuring the planning, prioritisation and implementation of projects, actions and enablers. In the SEND Recovery project plan, the Board have identified 14 main work streams. Some of these work streams will have direct financial impact on the deficit, whilst others are enablers to allowing the work to happen.

2. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on SEND Recovery workstreams

- 2.1 During the Covid-19 crisis lockdown period we have paused on SEND Recovery work that requires engagement with schools and providers. Work has continued to progress both background and internal work where possible. Details on workstream progress and impact of Covid-19 is shown in the table below. We are expecting a spike of activity when we get back to the new normal, which is also likely to impact on workstream progress. We have also put on hold any public consultations during this time which has meant delays in reducing costs. These have been added to the MHCLG financial return.
- 2.2 The Government has issued temporary legislative changes to the arrangements for education, health and care needs assessments and plans as a result of Covid-19. The changes allow Local Authorities and health commissioning bodies to use 'reasonable endeavours' to deliver or arrange the provision that is in EHCPs. We are required to contact all families whose child/young adult has an EHCP for their views on what provision might be

appropriate – a taskforce has been established to complete this, letters were issued week commencing 18 May. There will be financial costs associated with this.

3. Progress against SEND Recovery Workstreams

3.1 See Appendix A

Source Documents	Location
None	