

Paper for Discussion

High Needs Sub-Group

Date of meeting – 11th September 2019

Extension of funding for SEND Statutory Team -2020-2021

Author: Claire Merchant-Jones

Contact Details: cmerchantjones@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary

1.1 To extend the DSG contribution to SEN Statutory team for casework for a further financial year at a cost of £371,400 in recognition of the continued high needs conversion pressure coupled with continued increase in requests for statutory assessments outside of the high needs process.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Continuation of funding for financial year 2020/2021 in relation to the Statutory SEN team. This recognises the continued pressures in relation to requests for statutory assessments both relating to high needs conversion timetable and continued rise in statutory requests.

2.2 This will also support the key activities relating to potential savings within the DSG Recovery plan (Savings 2, 3 and 4) through a Local First approach:

- Developing Personalised Commissioning (funding following the learner)
- Responsible use of new Special School places
- Jointly commission personalised arrangements across education and social care using personal budgets 19-25 and in line with Local First approach
- Reducing reliance on independent placements through new special schools and mainstream inclusive places by total 40% by 2023/ 24

3. Background

3.1 It was agreed in October 2018 that funding would be secured from the High Needs block to temporarily increase capacity in the SEN Statutory team to complete the transition for young people from being in receipt to High Needs into funding into having Statutory Assessment. The Assessment and Review Officers are now in place and have provided capacity to support transfer of high needs students to Education Health and Care Plans and completed assessments outside of this process. At the time of the original funding agreement these roles were Fixed term until March 2020, when the proposed transfers were planned to be completed.

During the academic year 18/19 the Local Authority received 1015 requests for

statutory assessments compared to 643 over 17/18 academic year. This is an increase of 57% over one year.

Owing to the ongoing unprecedented demand on the SEND Statutory team for statutory assessment requests, the difficulty that has been encountered in recruiting staff to the team and the limited impact of mitigating actions introduced in May this year it has become apparent that this funding will need to be extended until March 2021 to support the 643 remaining children and young people in receipt of high needs funding who would be in scope for a statutory assessment.

This requires in excess of 35- 50 conversions to be undertaken/ month in addition to the new statutory assessment's requests based on 18/19 numbers at 85 /month. This extension recognises the time required to undertake the high needs conversion for those pupils remaining on high needs funding and supports ongoing improving performance to the statutory 20 -week indicator.

Improving the timeliness of statutory assessments is critical for children and young people, their families and educational settings across Somerset as securing any new high needs funding relies on statutory assessments being completed.

4. Implications – Financial and other

- 4.1 Additional commitment £371,400 from High Needs Budget

5. Background papers

- 5.1 Previous High Needs paper



SSF 3 Oct 2018
Agenda Item 5 - Arra