

Report of: Bristol Schools Forum

Title: Delivering Better Value in SEND

Date of meeting:	Thursday 12 th January 2023
Time of meeting:	5pm
Venue:	Virtual meeting
Officer Presenting Report	Richard Hanks

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to update Bristol Schools Forum on the development of the DfE's Delivering Better Value in SEND programme, key areas of focus for the forthcoming grant application and next steps.

2. Recommendation

The recommendation is that Schools Forum

- Note the content of this paper in order to understand the focus of the grant application and, if successful, how this aligns to the DSG Management Plan and High Needs Block Recovery Plan.

3. Background & Context:

The DBV Programme's main objective has been to identify local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The programme has designed its support through two key approaches:

1. Short term support:

To identify sustainable changes in each Local Authority that can drive high-quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and to support Bristol in building an evidence-based grant application to assist the implementation of those changes.

2. Informing Long Term Reform:

Build an objective evidence base across a third of the sector, which can be used to:

- Inform future policy and drive legislative and funding changes
- Build a national playbook and share best practice
- Inform future national programmes of similar scale and intent

4. Programme Phases



The programme was developed through the three modules you see above, as these are considered critical to ensuring Bristol can identify sustainable changes that will drive high

quality outcomes for children and young people (CYP) and support in developing our grant application.

Module 1 - In order to understand the volume and type of support Bristol's CYP have been receiving historically, and what that might look like going forward the three modules focused on building a clear baseline and both unmitigated and mitigated forecasts. These are currently being finalised, prior to sign off.

Module 2 – In order to have a sustained impact on CYP's outcomes this module focused on deeper dives in order to understand the root cause of why it has been difficult to achieve the high-quality outcomes and ambitions we have for all of our children and young people with SEND. The diagnostics covered detailed analysis on data sets, review cases and detailed reviews of previous feedback from stakeholders.

Module 3 – To ensure Local Authorities can practically implement solutions to the root causes identified in module 2, this module sought to understand how 'ready' the people, processes and systems are for change.

During this process:

- Over one million data points have been analysed
- Nearly 30 detailed case reviews have taken place
- Over 100 external partners engaged through surveys
- Undertaken detailed analysis of previous feedback e.g. annual parent/carer surveys

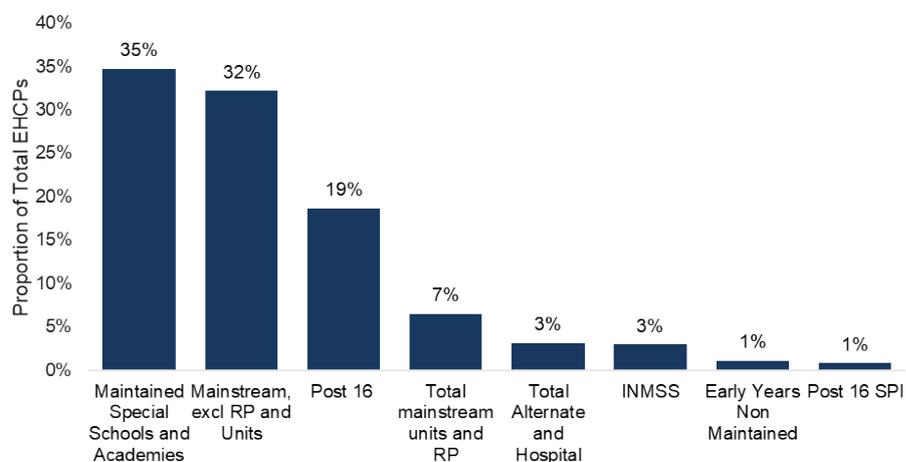
The current stage in the process is focused on the grant application.

5. Key Findings

Analysis of local Bristol datasets were used to identify high priority cohorts of children and young people with SEND to focus the deeper analysis. This also provided greater insight into Bristol's areas of spend and how it compares to other Local Authorities.

Bristol: 3416 EHCPs by Provision, Jan 2022

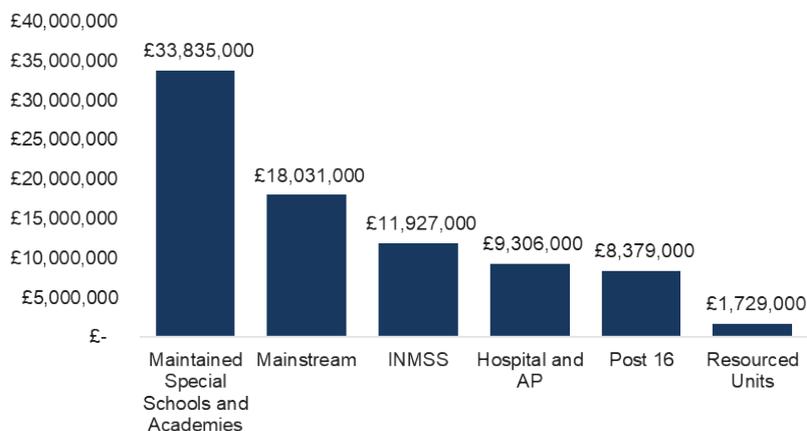
Source: SEN2 return



The largest share of EHCPs in Bristol in 2022 were Maintained Special Schools and Mainstream, with a total of 1086 EHCPs and 1007 EHCPs. This accounts for 67% of active EHCPs in 2022 in Bristol.

Bristol: High Needs Block Total Expenditure by Provision, 2021/22, (unmitigated)

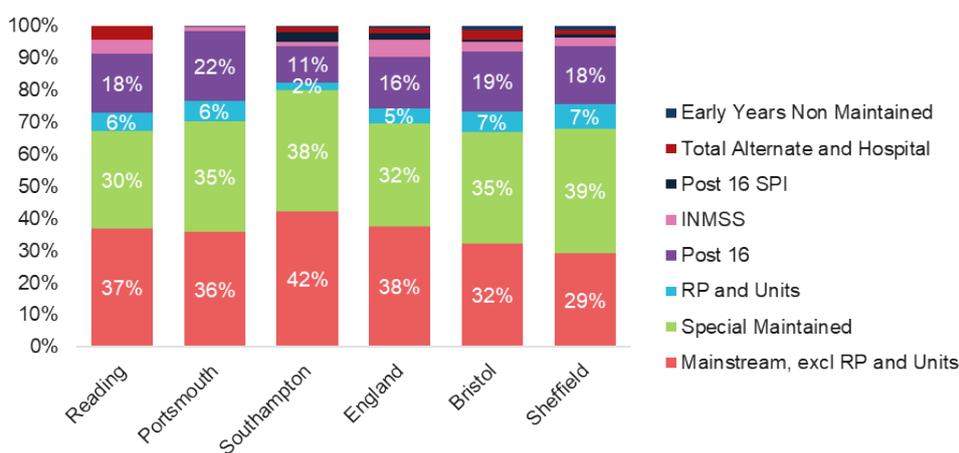
Source: DSG Plan and HN Recoupment



The largest spend area is in Maintained Special Schools, with a cost of £33.8 million for 1186 EHCPs in 2022, representing 41% of total HNB unmitigated expenditure. This figure includes children and young people on non-statutory support.

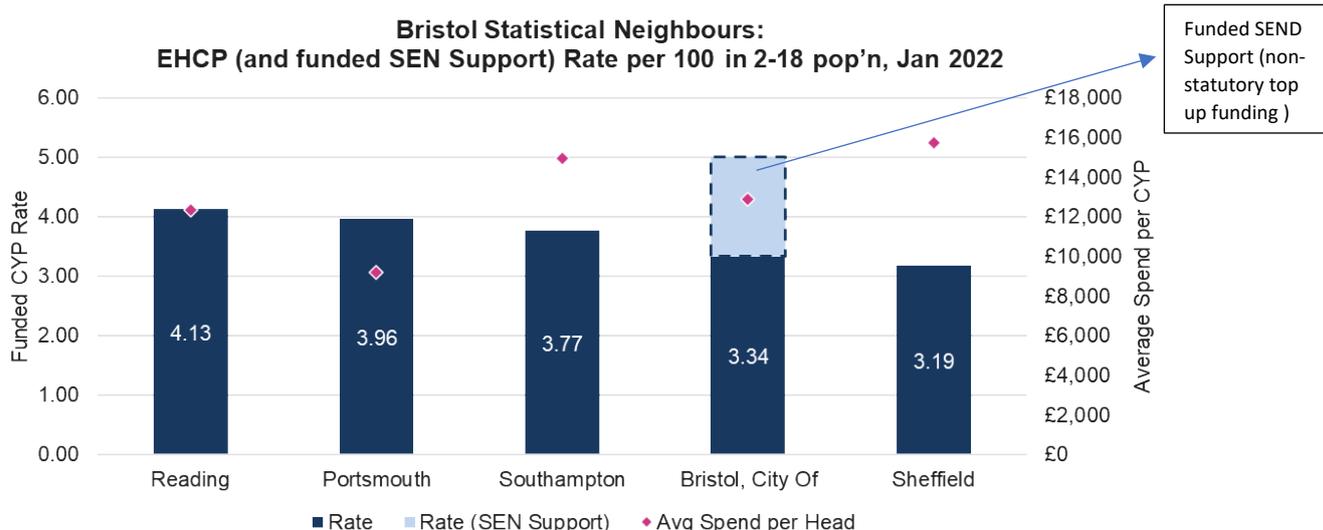
INMSS costs £11.9 million, however it accommodates 11.8 times fewer EHCPs than Maintained Special School, with 92 EHCPs. Therefore, the focus of the deeper analysis concentrated on Bristol’s mainstream and special schools.

Bristol: EHCP Proportions by Provision against statistical neighbours



Source – Rates of EHCP Use by Provision: Public Data based on SEN2 Return

Bristol has a low rate of children and young people in mainstream schools and settings, compared to it’s the majority of statistical neighbours and England’s average.



Source – Rates of EHCP Use by Provision: Public Data based on SEN2 Return, average spend based on S251 returns. Bristol funded SEN Support rate based on DSG Management Plan 2022-23

When including the rate of CYP on funded SEN Support (*assuming statistical neighbour LAs do not also provide non-statutory top-ups*), Bristol has the highest rate of support when adjusted for population, but at a similar cost per head compared to statistical neighbours. This suggests that overall, Bristol is spending more supporting its CYP with SEND.

In relation to the deep dives, it also brought together themes from existing Ofsted reports and stakeholder surveys, highlighting opportunities for improvement such as co-production and consistency of training. Areas identified build on the work already developed through the Education Transformation Programme, SEND Improvement activity and the ambition of Bristol’s Belonging Strategy.

The diagnostic deep dive evidence suggests being able to make a significant impact on any point relies on addressing an interconnected set of system issues:

1. Inclusive mainstream settings – quality, consistency and culture
2. Utilisation and awareness of support across Bristol – right support at the right time
3. Parental confidence in mainstream provision – communication and co-production

6. Grant Application

The focus of the grant application is currently under development, as module 3 of the programme closed at the end of December. However, given the above outputs, the design of the DfE funded programme is likely to focus on two key themes.

1. Strengthening the relationships between the school, family and child – improving the experiences of children with SEND in mainstream settings
2. Strengthening relationships between the school and the wider system – creating fair, transparent, consistent and financially sustainable processes underpinned by robust monitoring and accountability frameworks.

Both of the above areas, align and build on improvement work to date and the wider areas identified in the High Needs Block Recovery Plan (Appendix A), with the ambition that all activity is articulated within a single DSG Management Plan.

7. Next Steps

- January – focus on the detailed development of the grant application and completion of the grant requirements
- 4th February – Seek Cabinet approval to apply for the DfE funding
- Before 24th February – submit final application to the DfE's DBV Programme Board
- If successful, funding is released at the end of March with implementation starting in April.

Appendix A

High Needs Recovery Plan Themes

Theme A: Expanding Specialist Provision

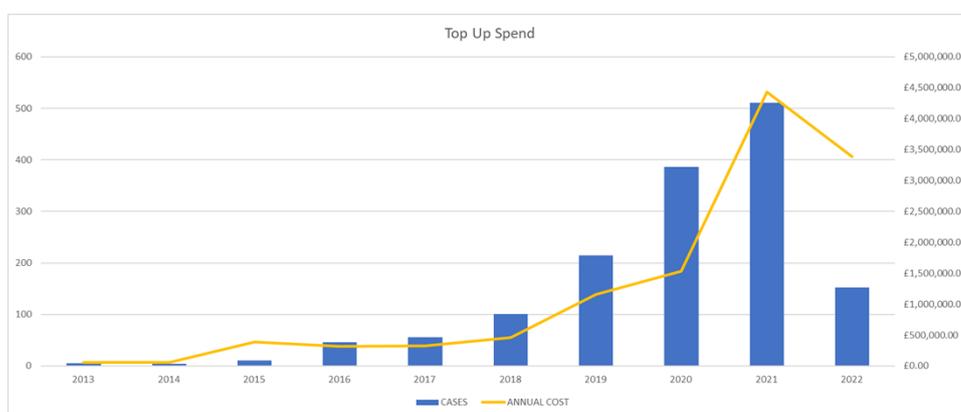
This is an existing programme of work. Increasing the number of specialist places in the city was a priority within the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) resulting from the previous Local Area Inspection. The places are being created to ensure there are sufficient places locally to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and ensure they are educated as close to their home and community as possible. Work has progressed and is on track to deliver 450 additional places by 2024.

The specialist places programme was set up primarily to ensure sufficiency locally and create greater local options for families. In addition, increased local specialist places will also help make more effective and efficient use of funding by reducing reliance on the independent non-maintained sector and out of authority placements.

Theme B: Non-Statutory Top and Early Intervention

This is a new proposed programme of work. Bristol is one of small handful of local authorities continuing to offer non-statutory top up funding. The funding supports the school-based stages of the SEND Code of Practice and is to fund short term early intervention for one to three years. The funding is for those CYP who are accessing ordinarily available provision (OAP) but may need short term additional intervention as specific gaps in their progress have been identified through the assess, plan, do review process.

Over the last few years, top-up funding has moved away from this targeted, clear approach and the number of applications has significantly increased (see graph below). A review of the top-up process will help us to understand how funding is utilised and the impact on outcomes for CYP. With the introduction of OAP guidance and training, inclusive practice should be more effective at utilising Element 1 and 2 funding to support need.



Theme C: Inclusion Practice in Schools and Settings

This is an existing programme of work. The development of a training and development offer to all education settings was also a focus within the WSOA, including the development of what is ordinarily available within schools. There is now a training and development programme in place for the sector to improve the quality of inclusive practice in schools and settings. Funding for the Belonging in SEND programme has just begun, following approval of funding from Schools Forum, to develop evidenced-based interventions in schools and settings to reduce suspensions and exclusions of pupils with SEND.

There is an assumption that improvements in inclusive practice and more effective use of

Element 1 and Element 2 funding will ensure appropriate early intervention, reduce escalation of need and have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people.

Theme D: Commissioning Frameworks

This is an existing programme of work. The Therapies Framework was published in July 2022. The aim of the new framework is to ensure therapies, mainly associated with Education, Health & Care Plans, are appropriate and reach quality assurance standards. Implementation of a Preferred Provider List model is estimated to deliver efficiencies compared to the previous procurement approach. A similar approach is also in progress for the commissioning of Alternative Learning Provision.

Theme E: Specialist Place Funding

This is a new proposed programme of work. The aim is to review the statutory funding system to ensure it is in line with other local authorities and implement a standardised banding and process which ensures statutory funding aligns with need. A clear and consistent approach will ensure the most efficient and effective use of funding.

Theme F: Post-16 Funding

This is a new proposed programme of work. Post-16 funding for SEND requires greater clarity and review, to ensure it is fully in line with the ESFA guidelines. There is a need to ensure the process is clear, transparent and equitable. As well as benchmarking against other local authorities, the Local Authority and post 16 settings need to understand and operate in line with statutory requirements.

Theme G: Alternative Learning Provision (ALP)

This is a new programme of work. The previous ALP review identified key recommendations, which continue to be addressed. The next stage of the process is to review ALP based on the proposals in the recent government Green Paper, reviewing the impact of the current model and the benefits of moving to a new model with a greater focus on outreach and early intervention that builds inclusive capacity in schools.

A model that ensures more CYP remain engaged in education within their own school or setting, limits the number of move between settings and builds capacity in schools to meet need has very clear benefits for CYP and families. The associated use of funding will also be more cost effective as it will both support CYP within their own settings but also build long term capacity in the system.