

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group

Education and Skills Service

Meeting: Additional Educational Needs Sub Committee of the Schools Forum
Date: 7 March 2018
Time: 9.30am
Venue: Ashington Meeting Room

Present: Marianne Allan <i>HT Cambois</i> Colin Bradshaw <i>HT Barndale</i> Sam Barron Head of SEND Strategy Tom Dexter HT PRU Emma Miller D HT & SENDCO Pegswood Primary Bruce Parvin Education & Skills Business Manager	Russell Pickering Senior SEND Manager Angela Whitehead School Funding and Business Relationship Manager Graham Wilkins Governor Deborah Wylie HT Cramlington Village Primary
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Notes Lisa Headington

Start time:		Action:
1.	Welcome and Introductions Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions took place.	
2.	In Attendance See above	
3.	Apologies for Absence Sue Aviston, Suzanne Connolly, Keith Faulkner and Colin Pearson.	
4.	Membership update Membership has changed since the last meeting. Andrew Day from NCEA has stepped down. Schools Forum position to be checked with regard to an Academy representative when reviewed as at 1 April 2018.	BP

	<p>Felicity Penny has resigned as Chair and withdrawn from the Committee meeting therefore need a new Chair for the AEN Committee.</p> <p>Graham Wilikins expressed an interest in chairing the group and it was agreed for him to take on this role with immediate effect.</p> <p>Keith Faulkner has expressed interest in being Vice Chair for the AEN Committee. All agreed for Keith to take on the role of Vice Chair.</p>	
5.	<p>Disclosure of Interests (If any)</p> <p>No declaration of pecuniary interest declared by members</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting/Matters arising from Previous Minutes:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2017 were accepted as a true record.</p> <p>Further discussion of items 6-8 to be discussed at todays meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>All happy with the draft Terms of Reference and agreed that it should be looked at on an annual basis at the first meeting each year and put to the Schools Forum.</p> <p>Amendment to be made in the first paragraph, Direct Schools Grant (DSG) to be changed to Designated Schools Grant.</p>	BP
8.	<p>SEN Strategy National Funding</p> <p>SB informed members that there are other Groups outside of the AEN Committee who are supporting different elements of the development work within SEND. The SEND Strategic Improvement Board supports the operational delivery of the local area SEND Action Plan. Members are at senior manager level from across health and social care, with HT representation from Mike Jackson, Cleaswell Hill and Andrew Day, NCEA. Task and finish groups feed into the Improvement Board</p> <p>In addition to this, the SEND Strategic Board sets overarching direction and with Director members.</p>	

GW met with SB to look at the Strategy for SEND & Inclusion Summary Development Plan.

Nicola Taylor (SEND Project Manager) and Angela Davies (SIP for SEND) is co-producing with SENCO's the graduated approach at a conference taking place in July. An SEN support plan is also being developed as part of this work. The plan for the Autumn Term is to visit schools. Evaluation is being done in conjunction with Health & Social Care. Schools will be informed of progress through regular bulletins. EM asked if parents could have guidance - agreed and to be part of offer.

SB discussed with members the different system goals of the Development plan around identification and assessment, pathways and outcomes and financial management.

AEN group to address the Financial Management (orange)

- Review banding use of top ups
- Strategies for High needs budget
- Funding mechanisms

The key focus for the AEN Committee needs to be to oversee the development of a strategy for managing the High Needs budget, and reviewing the funding banding and use of top up.

BP confirmed that we have set a challenging budget this year including a reduction in top up funding. Once National Funding Formula fully adopted wef 2020/21, it is understood there will not be the flexibility to switch between blocks.

Important to target right children at the right time. All in agreement to the approach of the payment process policy.

Discussion re the challenge around exclusions - Jane Walker and Dave Cookson are looking at exclusions and why children haven't got a school place.

DW queried if AEN committee's role is decision making or simply to make recommendations. BP confirmed that the role was seen as a "sounding board", to develop specific work streams and make recommendations to Schools Forum, as had been the case with the SEN Top Up payment policy.

TD sought to clarify, and members may not have the necessary expertise across all areas to make recommendations, but it was indicated there was wide variety of experience around the table.

9.	<p>Top up Funding</p> <p>GW asked members if they had any comments in relation to the SEN Top Up Funding draft policy.</p> <p>The document has been shared with schools and Schools Forum.</p> <p>SB stated that need to review Annex A which is the descriptors around the different bandings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Costs need to be reviewed ● Hours of support has been tweaked. ● Descriptors need reviewing ● Need to be more precise for EHCP and increase specificity ● Graduated approach to be more consistent ● Mainstream bands to be looked at. <p>RP and BP to look at TA levels and bandings/descriptors, to report to the June AEN meeting.</p> <p>1-1 issue raised as parents expect and demand this. The SEN support plan should help this.</p> <p>Impact of SLA don't need to buy in SEND Support services but this would provide assistance in the process. Funding can't be awarded without clear evidence of need, though alternative forms of support to funding should be considered.</p> <p>MA raised a query about what happens with those children you inherit from elsewhere as may not have evidence but they require significant resources in terms of support. Some flexibility with exceptional cases will be required - there will be an exceptional circumstances clause in the policy.</p> <p>Discussion re Top Up funding. GW stated there is a need to be transparent around what it is used for.</p> <p>AW queried accountability from schools and whether provision mapping will be instigated as was the case which was done 3 years ago. SB confirmed that this will be in the new system.</p> <p>A discussion took place that some children that are in special schools that could go to mainsream or vice versa, parental influence is an issue. RP stated that the code of practice is difficult to defend at tribunal and is currently going through a review by government.</p> <p>Discussion re descriptions of attainment within applications is very variable which makes identifying how much support is required</p>	RP/BP
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	<p>difficult. Many schools simply describe pupils as being ‘below Age Related Expectation (ARE)’ which is not sufficient evidence to indicate SEN. The degree to which a pupil is below ARE is key.</p> <p>BP highlighted section 5 page 3 of the SEN Top up draft policy re verification to Schools Census and submission of an SEN register. Form to be sent to SENDfinance@northumberland.gov.uk</p> <p>Top up payment will cease where policy not adhered to. Key principle that the funding followed the child was agreed by AEN members.</p> <p>DW brought up a issue regarding EOTAS and the school being charged for a pupil not attending school. Guidance to be provided regarding EOTAS and AP. The funding follows child.</p> <p>With specific reference to the Bandings (e.g Annex A), BP suggested that the number of hours should be fixed point rather than having this band. Issue of banding going up to 37 hours when a child is not in school for 37 hours and teaching is 25 hours was also highlighted.</p> <p>Due to being unable to access the screen, BP proposed anonymised data & observations to be produced by end of week for AEN members consideration. A key focus would be those pupils in receipt of top up but not recorded as such on census. This can be cross referenced to EMS system.</p> <p>RESOLVED : AEN Committee agreed policy, to incorporate amendments to be made regarding exceptional circumstances and EOTAS.</p> <p>GW thanked AW for her support over the years and wished her well in her retirement.</p>	BP
10.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business discussed.</p>	
	<p>End: 11.00am</p> <p>Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th June 2018 at 9.30am in the Ashington Room.</p>	