

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 22 OCTOBER 2020

UPDATE ON THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK BUDGET FOR 2020-21 AND 2021-22
Executive Director of People and Director of Resources

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the increasing budget difficulties being experienced on the 2020-21 High Needs Block (HNB) element of the Schools Budget, the significant medium term budget deficit now being forecast and the monitoring and intervention arrangements being put in place by the Department for Education (DfE).

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The HNB grant is allocated to LAs by the DfE through a national formula and is intended to fund support for children and young people with the most challenging educational requirements (SEND). It is the most complex part of the school funding framework.
- 2.2 Whilst the total cash increase for the 2020-21 Bracknell Forest (BF) HNB will be 8% per pupil to £17.008m (+9.5% cash), this is insufficient to meet the demands forecast and despite an ambitious improvement and savings programme, a £1.677m in-year deficit was estimated for 31 March 2021. This was forecast to rise to £4.761m by 31 March 2023 due to the estimated circa £1.5m per annum underlying funding gap.
- 2.3 During the year, work was planned to continue in partnership with the HNB sub-group of the Schools Forum to develop further service improvements and cost reductions to remove the remaining underlying funding gap. This was however expected to present challenges to what are sensitive budgets.
- 2.4 The financial challenges being experienced are not unique to BF with many LAs having to set deficit budgets. As expected, the coronavirus pandemic is having a significant impact on delivering the intended savings programme, which is compounded by significant staff turnover which has resulted in delays in providing up to date data for both financial monitoring and forecasting and service planning purposes through the changes set out in the SEND Commissioning Plan.
- 2.5 The current position has deteriorated, with the August budget monitoring cycle now reporting a £2.856m overspend for 2020-21, meaning a £4.533m in-year over spending (27% of budget) when the overspend built into the budget is also taken into account. There remains a degree of uncertainty in the accuracy of forecasts until all reconciliations are complete.
- 2.6 Taking account of the latest available information, and the expectation that the plans now in place to support SEND pupils are of a medium to long term nature the deficit now being forecast on HNB budget at 31 March 2023 has increased from £4.761m to £12.686m. There is now an estimated underlying annual funding gap of around £4.2m.

- 2.7 Whilst the majority of budgets supporting SEND are held within the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)¹, LAs retain responsibility for Education Psychology and the SEND assessment and monitoring process. As indicated above, pressures have increased on these Teams through increased demand and staff turnover with the 2019-20 accounts overspending by £0.102m and a £0.245m overspend currently forecast for 2020-21. These budgets are an LA funding responsibility.
- 2.8 In response to the continuing growth in deficits on HNB budgets, in January 2020, the DfE updated the status of the DSG ring-fence to make clear that any deficit must be carried forward to the Schools Budget in the next financial year or future financial years. This is intended to confirm that no liability for a deficit will fall onto an LAs General Fund.
- 2.9 The DfE has also strengthened their financial monitoring arrangements and interventions with those LAs experiencing the most significant difficulties. By moving to a deficit on the HNB element of the DSG, as well as experiencing a substantial reduction to the overall surplus in the DSG account, the council can expect some form of intervention from the DfE which could range from additional returns to detailed recovery planning with DfE officials. Precise requirements have yet to be confirmed although a Deficit Recovery Plan is expected to be required.
- 2.10 With the significantly deteriorating financial position, the council is proposing to support work to help bring the HNB budget closer to balance through allocation of resources from the Council's Transformation team to assist with the delivery of the key elements of the SEND Commissioning Plan and in short-term investments in SEND specialists. These specialists are estimated to cost up to £0.150m and will be an expense against the HNB budget.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Forum NOTES:

- 1 the current update on the HNB Budget and its medium-term financial plan which now projects a £12.686m deficit at 31 March 2023**
- 2 the expectation that the DfE will require completion of their HNB Deficit Recovery Plan template, which will be shared with the Forum in advance of submission**
- 3 the additional resources being applied to the delivery of the key elements of the SEND Commissioning Plan**

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure the Forum is aware of the significant financial challenges being experienced in the HNB Budget and that a clear plan of action is being put in place.

¹ The HNB Budget is funded by the DfE through a ring-fenced grant (the Dedicated Schools Grant) that uses a national funding formula of actual and proxy SEND factors to ensure a consistent approach to funding LAs. It can only be spent on the purposes prescribed by the DfE. Any under or overspending must also be ring-fenced and applied to a future Schools Budget. See Annex 1.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 A range of options will be considered with the HNB sub-group as the recovery plan is developed.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Funding Responsibilities

- 6.1 The HNB element of the DSG is allocated to LAs by the DfE through a national formula to support pupils with SEND and is intended to fund a continuum of provision for relevant pupils and students from 0-24. LAs in general commission services from providers. In-house arrangements are made in a relatively small number of areas. This is a ring-fenced grant on provisions that LAs have no funding responsibility for.

More information on the scope of the HNB and the determination of LA funding is set out in Annex 1.

- 6.2 In terms of LA funding responsibilities through the General Fund, these are defined as education psychology, undertaking the identification, assessment and monitoring of provision for children that require an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)², parental guidance and dispute avoidance and resolution. The council has allocated budget of £0.816m for these services in 2020-21.

2020-21 budget context

- 6.3 The key information and data available when the 2020-21 budget were being considered are as follows:
- Significant cost pressures are being experienced, which is a national issue, and not just limited to BF, with the number of pupils with a statement or EHCP having increased in the 2 years to March 2019 by 11.9%. The change in BF shows a steeper increase of 17.7%.
 - Taking account of the increasing use of private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers, costs are expected to increase by 27.3% during which time grant from the DfE has increased by 4.8%.
 - The government spending review confirmed an 8% increase in per head funding on relevant factors for BF for 2020-21 (9.5% cash increase after applying data updates in the national funding formula). This amounts to a £1.472m increase and total retained HNB DSG income of £17.008m.
 - Uncertainties remained around two key elements of the HNB funding formula: the basic entitlement factor of pupils in SEN institutions; and the import/export adjustment that ensures appropriate funding is moved between LAs to reflect cross-border movements of students, both of which would need to be estimated and subject to change in-year. The £17.008m reported income is therefore subject to change.

² An EHCP is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It explains the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person.

- The HNB national funding formula is being introduced on a phased basis. This is designed to ensure that those areas losing money have time to adjust their spending patterns and there is a funding “floor” to prevent losses in income. This approach has significantly benefitted BF as the council will receive additional transitional funding protection in 2020-21 of £2.5m which amounts to 13% of total income compared to the LA average of 2%. There is a risk that over time the funding “floor” money will be lost.
- The 3-year medium term financial forecast **with no interventions** predicted a cumulative £11.590m overspend at 31 March 2023.
- To reduce forecast costs and widen choice and improve services, a range of developments were supported by the Schools Forum that focussed on maintaining pupils in mainstream schools, including making financial contributions as necessary in order to avoid the significant cost implications when pupils move to specialist providers and improving commissioning. These developments identified the potential to effect cost reductions of £6.829m resulting in a revised cumulative deficit at 31 March 2023 of £4.761m.

6.4 Taking this background information into account, as well as the most up to date intelligence available at the time, the 2020-21 budget build and 3-year medium term financial forecast included the following assumptions:

- Reflecting on the ordinary expectation that support to SEND pupils will remain in place over the medium to long term, the £2.599m forecast overspend from 2019-20 would continue and be added as a pressure to the on-going cost base
- Demand would continue to increase at the average 3-year rate of 7.5% per annum (54 extra places a year would be required)
- Price inflation on fees would on average be 1.5% per annum.
- Income from the DfE would increase by the confirmed 8% in 2020-21 and 4% per annum thereafter, equivalent to the 2020-21 increase in per pupil funding rates paid by the DfE for mainstream schools.
- A programme of efficiencies and improvements would be introduced that were estimated to deliver cost reductions of £1.2m in 2020-21, a further £1.2m in 2021-22 and another £0.7m in 2022-23, aggregating to £3.2m of on-going savings after 3 years.
- The net effect of this medium-term plan was a projected cumulative deficit at 31 March 2023 of £4.761m, with a remaining underlying annual deficit of around £1.5m.

Medium-term financial forecast

6.5 Since the 2020-21 budget was set there have been a number of changes that will have different financial implications from those originally expected which in turn will impact on the medium-term financial forecast, the most significant of which are:

1. 2019-20 actual outturn performance
2. Performance against the above Key Service Developments, including impact of coronavirus pandemic
3. 2020-21 budget monitoring information

4. 2021-22 funding announcements from the DfE

2019-20 outturn

- 6.6 Being a ring-fenced grant, any accumulated under or overspending on the HNB budget would need to be included within the medium-term budget plan. The final 2019-20 accounts reported a £3.220m in-year overspending, £0.621m greater than the amount forecast when the budget was set.
- 6.7 Whilst there were also additional balances available at year end in the centrally managed Schools Budget, these were insufficient to prevent the Reserve moving to a deficit in the value of £0.141m. This is £0.041m greater than anticipated when the 2020-21 budget was set.
- 6.8 Once put in place, the general expectation is that support to SEND pupils will remain in place over the medium to long term, meaning that much of the £0.621m increased overspend from 2019-20 will roll forward into the on-going 2021-22 cost base. Over 3 years, this is therefore expected to add around £1.5m to the original cumulative deficit forecast.

Update on Key Service Developments – reflecting coronavirus pandemic

Original developments

- 6.9 In setting the original budget, a significant amount of change in service delivery was agreed with the Schools Forum and approved by the Executive Member. However, a number of factors have impacted the ability to make the changes as originally intended including:
1. The coronavirus pandemic. This has diverted priorities within the council and schools away from the HNB developmental projects
 2. Capacity to take forward the range of immediate developments needed.
 3. Lack of opportunities to collaborate with key partners.
 4. The Annual Reviews and Placement Monitoring officer took up post at the start of August. Although a recent appointment, developments are needed to develop a more robust approach to annual reviews particularly for the post 16 cohort. Initial forecasts suggest that at least 10% of plans could cease as a result of this approach potentially saving £0.150k per annum. Equally important would be the precedent that would be set by establishing this approach to manage processes and expectations for future years.
 5. The SEN finance officer formally started at the start of August. An operating model needs to be developed linked to placement decisions as set out in the Code of Practice.
- 6.10 The current assessment of anticipated progress against the financial savings indicates that £0.286m of the £1.287m will now be achieved, a shortfall of £1.001m. Whilst there is a significant deterioration in the savings in the first year, across the 3 year plan they are expected to remain close to the original cumulative £3.2m amount (£1.7m per annum in year 3), mainly as a result of additional SEN Unit places now expected to be open at BF schools.

Annex 2 provides more information on the service developments planned for 2020-21, including the original and current expectations. For some of the proposals,

capital funding has yet to be agreed, in particular for a potential Social, Emotional and Mental Health assessment and direct provision facility, although a significant source of S106 funding has been identified.

New initiatives

- 6.11 The original developments to HNB services and budgets were always the first step towards significant change, with the following section setting out anticipated plans. Financial implications have yet to be calculated for these proposals.
- 1) Review current governance and decision-making around the current SEND panel processes, intervention hub and high needs funding allocation:
 - a) Formal consultation with stakeholders regarding proposed changes to SEND decision-making processes / intervention hub / high needs funding levels and governance to be completed by November 2020.
 - b) Refine and develop the proposals based on feedback from consultation to develop a final set of proposals to be implemented from January 2021.
 - 2) Developing the market for SEND / Alternative Provision (AP) & Support:
 - a) Develop a process to invite Expressions of Interest (EOI) for primary age ASC specialist resourced provision during Autumn term 2020.
 - b) Review residential placements for complex needs including those for children and young people under Child Protection or who are looked after by September 2021.
 - 3) Joint Commissioning:
 - a) Develop a jointly agreed and co-produced approach to commissioning across health, social care and education reflecting best practice.
 - b) Explore effective routes to market for complex placements in partnership with BF commissioning, social care and health.
 - c) Review and explore options for the development of an East Berkshire Integrated Therapies service engaging with service users to develop the service specification.

HNB Budget Current position (provisional August monitoring cycle):

- 6.12 For the (provisional) August monitoring cycle, the majority of required data has now been made available following recruitment to the SEND Data and Finance post. Further updates are expected in the coming months once full reconciliations have been made and this may result in further significant changes. Based on the updates set out in this report, HNB services are now forecast to overspend the approved budget by £2.856m, which after adding the £1.677m overspend included in the budget, indicates a forecast in-year over spend of £4.533m.

Summary of key impacts on the in-year over spending to budget

- 6.13 The majority of significant budget variances are occurring on payments to BF schools and external providers for additional support needs and the cost of placements. These can be separated into:
- 1) Extra places purchased: +£1.291m

The budget assumed purchased places in 2019-20 would increase by the 3 year average of 7.5% to 778. The current forecast is for 841 places (+16%).

- 2) Increase in average price of place: +£0.547m
The forecast average placement cost of £19,761 is now expected to be £20,464 (+3.6%).
- 3) Under achievement against savings: +£1.001m
The most significant savings plan items have slipped (see Annex 2)
- 4) Other budgets: £0.017m

A number of services are reporting relatively small variances

Annex 4 sets out the forecast financial performance of the Schools Budget based on provisional information available at the end of the August reporting cycle.

2021-22 funding announcements from the DfE

6.14 The DfE have confirmed the following elements of funding for next year:

- The funding floor is set at 8% so each LA will see an increase of at least 8% per head of their 2 to 18 population (as estimated by the ONS).
- The gains cap is set at 12%, allowing LAs to see gains up to this percentage increase under the formula, again calculated on the basis of per head of population.

6.15 As expected, with BFC benefitting from significant financial support through the funding “floor” – 14% of the HNB allocation to BF (£2.857m) is through the funding floor, compared to an LA average of 2%, placing BF the 6th most reliant LA for this factor NB 58 LAs do not receive any funding protection - the basic funding allocation will increase by the minimum 8%, which equates to a further £0.681m compared to the original assumption of a 4% increase.

Updated HNB Budget Medium term financial forecast

6.16 Table 1 below sets out a summary of the revised medium-term financial forecast, reflecting the changes set out above. It continues to assume that placement numbers will increase by the 3 year average to 2019-20 of 7.5% rather than the 16% expected in 2020-21. The current expectation is that the original £1.5m per annum underlying over spend will increase to an average of around £4.2m – over 20% of the annual grant allocation - with the forecast deficit at 31 March 2023 now at £12.686m.

Annex 3 sets out more detail on the anticipated expenditure and Annex 2 for the planned interventions.

Table 1: HNB Budget: Medium term financial forecast after interventions

Item	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	£m	£m	£m	£m
HNB DSG income to BFC	15.464	17.008	18.369	19.104
Anticipated change		1.545	1.361	0.735
Change (cash)		9.5%	8.0%	4.0%
Forecast spend - no interventions	18.684	21.828	23.445	25.105
Change		4.819	5.076	6.001
		16.8%	7.4%	7.1%
<u>Anticipated funding gap:</u>				
Annual	3.220	4.678	5.076	6.001
DSG reserve 31/3/20	-3.079	0.141		
Cumulative	0.141	4.819	9.895	15.896
<u>Planned interventions:</u>				
SEND support stage		-0.054	-0.068	-0.068
Reducing demand for EHCP		-0.082	-0.585	-0.997
Review PAN at specialist providers		-0.150	-0.200	-0.200
Reducing reliance on external providers		0.000	-0.041	-0.064
Improved commissioning		0.000	-0.197	-0.290
Central Services:		0.000	-0.084	-0.130
Forecast impact of interventions		-0.286	-1.175	-1.749
Cumulative		-0.286	-1.461	-3.210
<u>Funding gap after interventions</u>				
Annual		4.533	3.900	4.252
Cumulative		4.533	8.434	12.686

LA Staffing Budgets

6.17 The Education Psychology Service (EPS) budget is under considerable pressure due to limited capacity to meet the increased demand (both statutory and traded) in service.

Statutory assessments continue to increase year on year nationally and each assessment requires Educational Psychologist input.

At the end of the 2019 calendar year, Bracknell Forest EPS was under capacity when a Senior EP and the Principal EP both left the service. At this point Bracknell entered

a contract with Innovate Services to address the limited leadership capacity within the service and also some of the key challenges.

The EPS previously had undelivered on the traded offer that was launched in April 2019 and there was 'roll-over' that needed to be fulfilled in this financial year (increasing demand). Additionally, there was a back-log of statutory assessment work that had not been completed and needed addressing. The EPS statutory timeframe adherence has risen from 22% in April 2020 to over 90% for June and July 2020.

Currently the service has 3.0 fte vacancy and also 0.6fte on maternity leave. Leaving only 3.60fte educational psychologists in post.

Key outputs expected from the service provided by Innovate include:

- Provide strategic overview for the EPS
- Improve and maintain high standards for the EPS statutory assessment timeframe
- Complete the backlog of statutory assessments that had built up and where already beyond the required timeframes (all assessments completed and up-to-date)
- Liaise with the head teacher forum to communicate the traded offer that had been purchased would not be delivered in full during the financial year (due to capacity and limited planning by previous EPS leadership)
- Ensure the previous EPS traded offer that had not been delivered in full and the new traded offer (April 2020 onwards) would be delivered to schools
- Develop and implement an EHCP quality assurance system across Bracknell Forest

To deliver on the traded service offer and the statutory demands of the service, Bracknell Forest are having to utilise locum / agency EP staff to increase their capacity. There is a national shortage of EPs and despite 3 recruitment cycles Bracknell Forest EPS have received no applications for the EP permanent posts advertised.

Innovate Services have been commissioned to the end of December with £0.0146m currently expected to be spent of securing professional management and leadership of the Team and £0.149m on the services of locum workers.

Similarly, the SEN budget faces on-going pressure mainly due to a continued increase in the number of statutory requests for assessments the LA receives and the proportion of plans that are issued. The previously established SEN Team had been in place since at least 2014 to address the transfers from statements to plans. This process was completed in March 2018. Around the same time, the LA experienced an increase in the proportion of plans held by Bracknell Forest and has continued to increase by at least 10% each year. The scale of this increase has led to staffing pressures and a change in the way key SEN functions are delivered. The Team now has a flat structure of SEN Officers led by an Assistant Team Manager (maternity cover currently in place).

The Service Lead for SEN has remained vacant since September 2019 and despite 3 recruitment cycles, we have not been able to make an appointment to this key position.

Furthermore, and as mentioned above, the lack of appropriate local placements has continued to place significant pressures to specialist independent, out of borough placements which come at a high cost.

The SEN Team now has an Annual Review officer in post and a robust placement monitoring and review process is being developed to identify transition opportunities for children and young people from out of borough settings to be located more closer to home where is appropriate to do so.

Paragraphs 6.9 to 6.11 above outlines the measures in place and being developed to address SEN pressures.

The following are in place to address EPS pressures:

- Sought funding from social care to jointly fund specialist EP posts that will create attractive positions and aim to attract applications (adverts are live now). This will reduce locum / agency spend and address capacity issues.
- Schools have been contacted to highlight the community support that was provided by the EPS in the summer term (during school closures through COVID-19) to highlight that there will be a reduction in EPS delivery (pro-rata) to account for this (alleviating some demand pressures that a 'backfill' would have created)
- Job description and person specification written for permanent Principal EP post with advert to go out. This will provide leadership support from January 2021 and the Innovate Services contract can cease from December 31st 2020 (reducing financial pressures).
- Clear infrastructure in place and long term plan to develop the traded EP service to increase income generation and ensure it is a 'self-sustaining' offer with no financial impact on the LA (providing a front line early intervention service that funds itself and aims to reduce statutory demand, so making the LA a saving by providing this service).

DfE monitoring and interventions

HNB budgets

- 6.18 In response to the continuing growth in deficits on HNB budgets, in January 2020, the DfE updated the status of the DSG ring-fence to make clear that any deficit must be carried forward to the Schools Budget in the next financial year or future financial years. This is intended to confirm that no liability for a deficit will fall onto an LAs General Fund. In addition, LAs are no longer permitted to use their General Fund income to fund the Schools Budget without express permission of the Secretary of State.
- 6.19 Under the DSG conditions of grant for 2020-21, any LA with a DSG deficit of any size, or that is likely to fall into a DSG deficit in the near future, should have a plan for managing its DSG account going forward, and must keep its Schools Forum regularly updated about its plan, including high needs pressures and potential savings. It must also respond to enquiries from the DfE about the plan.
- 6.20 The DfE recognises that there may be some LAs which will not be able to pay off their historic deficit from the DSG over the next few years. In these cases, the DfE expects

to work together with the LA to agree a plan of action to enable the LA to pay off its deficit over time.

- 6.21 As part of an appropriate agreed package of measures, the DfE will, if necessary, make funds available from within the overall total of DSG so that the local authority can pay off its deficit over time. The DfE will need convincing evidence from the LA that it would be impracticable to pay off a historic deficit from the DSG it would expect to receive in future years.
- 6.22 Additionally, the DfE expects to approach selected LAs to begin discussions with them during 2020. These discussions are likely to be detailed, and in order to make this process manageable it will be necessary to limit discussions during 2020-21 to a fairly small number of authorities. The DfE expects to expand the discussions to other LAs during 2021-22 and subsequent years.

Overall DSG account

- 6.23 In 2020-21, the DfE extended the rules under the DSG conditions of grant so any LA with an overall deficit on its DSG account – includes HNB, Early Years funding and general Schools Budget - at the end of the 2019-20 financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must co-operate with the DfE in handling that situation by:
- providing information as and when requested by the DfE about its plans for managing its DSG account in the 2020-21 financial year and subsequently
 - providing information as and when requested by the DfE about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget
 - meet with officials of the DfE as and when they request to discuss the local authority's plans and financial situation
 - keep the Schools Forum regularly updated about the local authority's DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential savings

Potential Impact in BF

- 6.24 By moving to a deficit on the HNB element of the DSG, as well as experiencing a substantial reduction to the overall surplus in the DSG account, the council can expect some form of intervention from the DfE which could range from additional returns to detailed recovery planning with DfE officials.
- 6.25 Whilst precise requirements of BF have yet to be confirmed, the DfE has recently issued a management plan template to help LAs to manage their DSG and provide the DfE with the initial required information. The template is designed to help LAs:
- comply with DfE requirements of providing a recovery plan where the DSG is in a deficit or has experienced a substantial reduction to the overall surplus
 - monitor how DSG funding is being spent
 - compare data on high needs spend between LAs
 - highlight areas where LAs may wish to review spending

- form evidence-based and strategic future plans for the provision of children and young people with SEND
- present complex funding information simply to schools forums and other external stakeholders
- provide a consistent reporting format to help LAs share best practice and initiatives

6.26 The template is being reviewed and will be presented to either the November or December Schools Forum meeting for comment.

National context

6.27 Despite the DfE attempting to clarify that HNB budgets need to be funded from DfE grant, there is increasing nervousness in the s151 officer community about costs potentially falling on the General Fund. The main concern being a significant deficit should not be present in LA accounts without having some way of addressing it.

Next Steps

6.28 Following co-production with key partners, a robust SEND Commissioning Plan has been developed with the action plan now being finalised. This sets out the details and steps to be taken from 2020 – 2022 to address not only the current budget pressures arising but also the range of strategic and operational changes needed to readdress the balance between available resources and provision. More information is set out in paragraph 6.11, with Annex 5 setting out the SEND Commissioning Plan and Annex 6 the associated Action Plan.

6.29 The council has recognised the HNB budget position as a significant concern and has agreed that additional resources are required to progress the Action Plan and in particular:

1. That the HNB Budget difficulties are recognised as a specific project within the council's Transformation Programme, with appropriate resources allocated to facilitate progress.
2. That the HNB budget sets aside up to £0.150m in order to
 - Appoint a Lead Commissioning Officer to take forward the implementation priorities set out within the SEND Commissioning Plan and Action Plan (annex 4 and 5). These priorities have been determined following a robust sufficiency analysis.
 - Increased resource for data management and analysis
 - Develop and implement an improved annual review process and placement decisions process

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

7.1 As set out in the report High needs funding is provided to local authorities through the high needs block of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). Local authorities must spend

that funding in line with the associated conditions of grant, and School and Early Years Finance Regulations.

Director of Finance

- 7.2 The financial implications anticipated at this stage confirm the expected significant deterioration in the financial position of the HNB budgets. A number of developments are planned that may make a contribution to cost reductions. However, a funding gap remains, and the budget is heading towards an unsustainable position.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 The budget proposals ensure funding is targeted towards vulnerable groups and therefore an EIA was not required.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 There are strategic risks around ensuring all schools remain financially stable as well as pupils with SEND receive timely and appropriate support for their education. A failure to develop a plan for a sustainable HNB budget will place at risk the need to make more drastic changes at a later date.

8 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 Schools, the Schools Forum, including the HNB sub-group and the People Directorate Management Team.

Method of Consultation

- 8.2 Formal consultation and written reports.

Representations Received

- 8.3 Incorporated into this report.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

Paul Clark, Business Partner – People Directorate (01344 354054)
<mailto:paul.clark@bracknell-forest.gov.uk>

Kashif Nawaz, Head of Children's Support Services (01344 353318)
kashif.nawaz@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Doc. Ref

Doc. Ref [https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools Forum/\(99\) 221020/2020-21 and 2021-22 HNB Budget update report-v2.docx](https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools%20Forum/(99)%2021020/2020-21%20and%2021-22%20HNB%20Budget%20update%20report-v2.docx)

Overview of the HNB Budget

1. The HNB element of the DSG supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and is intended to fund a continuum of provision for relevant pupils and students from 0-24. LAs receive funding for these provisions from the DfE and in general commission services from providers. In-house arrangements are made in a relatively small number of areas.
2. The DfE has determined that where the cost of provision is above £10,000 it will be classified as high needs. In such circumstances, a “place-plus” approach to funding will generally be used which can be applied consistently across all providers that support high needs pupils and students as follows:
 - a. **Element 1 or “core education funding”**: equivalent to the age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU) in mainstream schools, which the DfE has stated the national average is around £4,000.
 - b. **Element 2 or “additional support funding”**: a budget for providers to deliver additional support for high needs pupils or students with additional needs of up to £6,000.

Specialist and Alternative Providers (AP), such as special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) only cater for high needs pupils and therefore receive a minimum £10,000 (Element 1 funding plus Element 2) per agreed place.
 - c. **Element 3, or “top-up funding”**: funding above elements 1 and 2 to meet the total cost of the education provision required by an individual high needs pupil or student, as based on the pupil’s or student’s assessed needs. This element is paid to all provider types, for pupils with assessed needs above the £10,000 threshold.
3. Additionally, HNB DSG is also intended to be used where high needs provisions are not arranged in the form of places e.g. specialist support for pupils with sensory impairments, or tuition for pupils not able to attend schools etc.
4. The statutory regulatory framework requires the council to decide on the arrangements to be put in place for the HNB and associated resources and for the Forum to comment on their appropriateness. The current approach in BF is to develop the services during the year in partnership with schools and has therefore created a sub-committee of the Forum to gather views and help shape arrangements. Final budget decisions are taken in March each year by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning.

DfE Reforms

5. A new National Funding Formula (HNB NFF) was introduced in April 2018 to replace a system that largely allocated funding based on historic spending decisions. The core elements of funds distribution to LAs now comprises:
 1. **Basic entitlement** (initially £4,000 per pupil / student that the LA is responsible for educating that is attending an SEN institution)
 2. **Historic spend** (50% of 2017-18 baseline amount agreed with each LA)
 3. **Population** (Share of national budget allocation based on projected 2-18 year olds at the relevant mid-year as a proportion of all 2-18 year olds)

4. **Free school meals** (Share of national budget allocation based on resident pupils eligible to FSM as a proportion of all pupils eligible to FSM)
5. **Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index** (Share of national budget allocation based on number of 2-18 year olds in IDACI bands A-F as a proportion of all pupils in IDACI bands A-F)
6. **Bad health** (Share of national budget allocation based on number of resident children aged 0-16 in bad or very bad health in the general population census as a proportion of all projected children in bad or very bad health)
7. **Disability** (Share of national budget allocation based on number of resident children aged 0-16 for whom parents are eligible to disability living allowance (DLA) as a proportion of all eligible DLA families)
8. **Key Stage 2 low attainment** (Share of national budget allocation based on number of resident pupils who did not attain level 3 in reading tests plus those that did not attain a scaled score in reading test or were not entered as a proportion of all relevant children)
9. **Key stage 4 low attainment** (Share of national budget allocation based on number of resident pupils who did not attain 5 GCSEs at grades A* to G as a proportion of all relevant children).
10. **Hospital education** (LA specific funding based on budgeted spend)

6. One of the key outcomes for the DfE from these reforms is to ensure that any change in the amount of funding allocated to individual LAs must be introduced slowly to allow those areas facing reductions time to adjust to the new amounts. This is because expenditure is mainly incurred on educational fees and these generally remain unchanged throughout the course of each pupil's time in the relevant institution which often presents commitments for over 10 years. Therefore, in addition to the core factors set out above, there will be further adjustments to each LAs HNB funding as follows:

1. An initial funding floor adjustment to add the cash amount difference where the normal operation of the HNB formula does not deliver at least a 0.5% increase in per head (2-18 year old population) funding compared to the baseline amount of expenditure. The protection is not calculated on elements of the formula that are subject to later updates and are in proportion to estimated population changes (so a projected decrease in population will result in a lower overall cash percentage increase, subject to a cash protection).

There is a net £174m cost to the Funding Floor in 2020-21, which amounts to 2.1% of total funding and illustrates the importance of moving to the new formula in a measured way.

For LAs experiencing a reduction in population, there will be a second funding floor adjustment to ensure total cash funding does not fall below the baseline amount. Note, the funding floor adjustment is not applied to the basic entitlement factor i.e. current numbers of high needs pupils and students or the import / export adjustment (see note 2. directly below) as the DfE want to ensure that year on year changes in these factors are reflected in a LAs funding.

2. An import / export adjustment so those LAs sending out more pupils to other LAs lose £6,000 per pupil funding to reflect the requirement of the resident LA to finance all place funding in the SEN institutions in their area, irrespective of which LA places the student. This amount is added to the £4,000 per pupil / student funding included in the main formula to achieve the £10,000 place

funding cost. This is a lagged adjustment. LA funding allocations are adjusted from January census data, but actual places purchased will generally be based on actual student numbers taking up places during the year.

This removes some of the unfairness in the previous funding system where LAs did not generally contribute to Element 1 and 2 costs for their students in institutions in other LAs.

7. An area cost adjustment will be applied where relevant (7.4
8. % uplift for BFC) to all factors other than historic spend as this will already reflect local cost variations. This recognises additional costs in some areas, most notably enhanced salary payments in and around London, and follows the same approach adopted by the DfE in the funding reforms introduced for mainstream schools. The HNB area cost adjustment comprises 2 elements: one for non-teaching staff; and another for teaching staff. As the ratio of teaching to non-teaching staff in special schools is different from that in mainstream schools, this calculation is different to that used in the School NFF (where the BFC area cost adjustment is 5.6%).
9. The new HNB NFF will deliver significantly less funding to BF than the current arrangements. The draft 2021-22 HNB DSG update from the DfE indicates £2.857m funding protection for BFC, which is around 14% of total funding which clearly illustrates the importance of the funding floor adjustment from a BF perspective. On average, LAs receive 2.1% of their HNB funding through this factor.

HNB Budget – medium term savings summary

Item	Original Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact		Current status	Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact at September 2020	
	£m			£m	
<p><u>Planned changes:</u></p> <p><u>SEND support stage</u> SEN hub</p>	-0.054	Assumes 10 more students retained in mainstream schools with additional support in each of the next 3 years. Savings arise from lower cost top up funding in mainstream schools compared to permanent external placement / AP support.	Achieved	-0.054	14 students were referred to the Hub. 4 referrals led to a transfer to a specialist setting - the remaining 10 students were able to continue in their mainstream setting.
<p><u>Reducing demand for EHCP</u> New SEN units - Phase 1</p>	-0.689	Following bids from interested schools, capital funding has been allocated for the development of 5 in-school units to cater for pupils at risk of requiring an EHCP or with an EHCP that can be maintained in a mainstream school with additional specialist interventions. Up to 85 new places are expected to become available by September 2021. Maintained schools and the HNB will contribute to the operating costs which will result greater numbers of pupils being retained in BF schools.	Will not achieve in 2020-21	0.000	The development of the first phase of SPCF projects was delayed due to the lockdown at the end of Mar '20. Additionally, finance struggled to collect the data required from schools which significantly delayed progress. Progress resumed over the summer term and these units are now complete. The next stage is to engage with the settings and establish individual SLA's in time for pupil admissions by Sept '21.

Item	Original Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact		Current status	Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact at September 2020	
	£m			£m	
New SEN units - Phase 2	0.000	Further development of in-school units that will be rolled out to additional schools subject to suitable bids and capital funding. Potential extension yet to be determined, but assumed at around half existing known plans at 40 places, commencing on a phased basis from September 2021.	On target for original September 2021 opening	0.000	Confirming SPCF allocations for bids submitted as part of phase 2 has been delayed due to Covid and arising pressures. Progress has now resumed and final allocations on 2 of the 4 projects will be made by end of Sept' 20. The remaining two are expected to be finalised by the end of the Autumn Term '20. Once settings have been allocated their funding, SLA's will be established enabling pupil placements to be made from Sept '21.
Savings from BLV primary unit	0.000	Assumes new SEN Unit opens in September 2021 to 3 pupils (opening delayed 1 year), with similar number of admissions thereafter. Specialism for admission yet to be agreed.	In progress	0.000	Assumes new SEN Unit opens in September 2021 to 3 pupils (opening delayed 1 year), with similar number of admissions thereafter. Specialism for admission yet to be agreed.
Spare places at Meadow Vale Unit	-0.029	The SEN Provision at Meadow Vale has 3 vacant places. The funding has been withdrawn.	Achieved	-0.029	
SEMH assessment and direct provision facility	0.000	Feasibility study to commence to create a 30 place SEMH assessment and 40 place provision on an existing school site with spare capacity. Potential for phased opening from September 2021 with planned return to the borough for suitable students currently placed in similar, external provision.	In Progress	0.000	Suitable site identified and is going through due process to establish feasibility and development of relevant of business plan. Unlikely to be occupied before Sept 2022

Item	Original Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact		Current status	Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact at September 2020	
	£m			£m	
Savings from Rise ASD Secondary Resource provision	-0.053	Assumes 5 BF students are admitted each September at reduced cost to savings arising from older students leaving education at alternative specialist provider until Unit reaches capacity at September 2021. Future option to consider scope for post-16 provisions / collaboration with B&W College.	Achieved	-0.053	There were 39 BF pupils placed at The Rise in Sept' 20 compared with 20 in Sept '19.
<u>Review PAN at specialist providers</u>					
Extra 5 in-house AP places at College Hall PRU	-0.050	Increase the number of funded places by 5 from April 2020 and again in April 2021. The extra £25k per place will be offset by savings of around £10k per place compared to other AP providers	Achieved	-0.050	number on NoR at College Hall? What was it Sept' 19
Extra 10 places at KLS	-0.100	Increase the number of funded places by 10 from April 2020. The extra £25k per place will be offset by savings of around £10k per place compared to other similar specialist providers.	Achieved	-0.100	There were 182 pupils on roll at KLS in Jan'19 (<i>school census</i>) which had moved to 195 for Jan'20 (<i>school census</i>).
<u>Reducing reliance on external providers</u>					
Increase BF placements at KLS	0.000	Ensure 4-5 BF students replace OLA students at KLS each year to ensure better value high quality placements. Deferred 1 year.	In progress	0.000	Currently developing placement planning process including KLS. On target for impact in subsequent years

Item	Original Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact		Current status	Plan comments and 20-21 budget impact at September 2020	
	£m			£m	
Replace no top up pupils at KLS with higher needs pupils	0.000	Ensure that as the 11 relatively low level need students without top up funding leave KLS that they are replaced with higher need students that currently need to travel out of area due to shortage of places. Assumes 2-3 movers, with new top up cost of circa £15k (no place funding to pay) with circa £20k per pupil net saving. Deferred 1 year	In progress	0.000	On target for impact in subsequent years
<u>Improved commissioning</u>					
Inflation management	-0.077	Assumes save 0.5% per annum on care inflation assumption	Will not achieve in 2020-21	0.000	to manage inflation below 1%
Block contracts	-0.070	Economies from prices as providers received guaranteed income.	Will not achieve in 2020-21	0.000	Priority set out within the SEN Commissioning Plan and being led by the LA's commissioning Team. Project timeline currently being confirmed.
Price negotiation with providers	-0.060	Undertake individual negotiation with providers admitting 4 or more students to secure price discounts.	Will not achieve in 2020-21	0.000	Priority set out within the SEN Commissioning Plan and being led by the LA's commissioning Team. Project timeline currently being confirmed.
<u>Central Services:</u>					
- Reviews to be completed	-0.105	A range of services will be reviewed for quality, impact and value for money.	Will not achieve in 2020-21	0.000	QA matrix in place to determine benefit of relevant SLA's. Review of services and support functions to be scoped for financial viability.
Forecast impact of interventions	-1.287			-0.286	

HNB Budget – medium term cost summary

Item	2019-20 £m	2020-21 £m	2021-22 £m	2022-23 £m	Comment
<u>Income:</u>					
1 Current HNB DSG	15.790	15.537	17.008	18.369	
2 BFC academy places deduction	0.326				
3 Anticipated change		1.472	1.361	0.735	2022-23 change assumed at 4% in line with 2019-20 increase in school NFF. 2020-21 and 2021-22 estimated actuals.
4 Total DSG income to BFC	15.464	17.008	18.369	19.104	
5 Change (cash)		9.5%	8.0%	4.0%	
<u>Expenditure:</u>					
6 Base budget / cost forecast	15.464	18.684	21.828	23.445	Builds in prior year over spend as an ongoing pressure. 2020-21 base includes £1.677m additional funds for forecast over spending.
7 Actual over spend	3.220				
8 Provision for inflation			0.327	0.352	Assumed at 1.5% per annum
9 Other pressures		3.144	1.289	1.309	Current growth trend on placements
10 - <i>estimated growth in demand</i>			54	54	Retains 7.5% growth assumption from 3 year average. 2019-20 was 16%.
11 Forecast spend - no interventions	18.684	21.828	23.445	25.105	
12 Change		3.144	1.617	1.660	
		16.8%	7.4%	7.1%	
<u>Net funding gap:</u>					
13 Annual	3.220	4.678	5.076	6.001	
14 DSG reserve 31/3/20	-3.079	0.141			
15 Cumulative	0.141	4.819	9.895	15.896	

**2020-21 PROVISIONAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE
SCHOOLS BUDGET AS AT THE END OF AUGUST 2020**

Service Area	Approved Budget			Estimated Variance			Note
	Spend	Income	Net	Under spending	Over spending	Net variance	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Schools Block							
<u>Delegated and devolved funding:</u>							
Delegated Mainstream School Budgets	85,169	0	85,169	0	0	0	
School Grant income	0	-12,313	-12,313	0	0	0	
Schools Block	85,169	-12,313	72,856	0	0	0	
<u>LA managed items:</u>							
Retained de-delegated Budgets:							
<i>Behaviour</i>	253	0	253	-21	14	-7	
<i>Schools in Financial Difficulty</i>	201	0	201	0	0	0	
<i>Official Staff Absences</i>	350	0	350	0	0	0	
<i>English as an Additional Language</i>	104	0	104	-11	17	6	
<i>PRC / Licence Fees / FSM checking</i>	495	0	495	0	2	2	
Combined Service Budgets:							
<i>Education Attainment and School Transport for LAC</i>	176	0	176	-7	0	-7	
<i>Family Intervention Project / Domestic Abuse</i>	106	0	106	-4	0	-4	
<i>CAF Co-ordinator</i>	42	0	42	-3	3	0	
<i>SEN Contract Management</i>	33	0	33	0	0	0	
<i>Education Health / Sport</i>	48	0	48	0	0	0	
Statutory and Regulatory Duties	501	0	501	0	0	0	
Other Schools Block provisions and support services	768	0	768	-12	0	-12	
LA managed items:	3,077	0	3,077	-58	36	-22	
Sub total Schools Block	88,246	-12,313	75,933	-58	36	-22	
High Needs Block							
Delegated Special Schools Budgets	4,486	0	4,486	0	97	97	
Maintained schools and academies	4,459	0	4,459	-103	1,042	939	
Non Maintained Special Schools and Colleges	6,133	0	6,133	0	1,457	1,457	
Education out of school	1,690	0	1,690	-2	411	409	
Other SEN provisions and support services	1,917	0	1,917	-96	50	-46	
Sub total High Needs Block	18,685	0	18,685	-201	3,057	2,856	
Early Years Block							
Free entitlement to early years education	7,191	0	7,191	-6	17	11	
Other Early Years provisions and support services	370	1	371	-19	0	-19	
Sub total Early Years Block	7,561	1	7,562	-25	17	-8	
Dedicated Schools Grant	0	-100,503	-100,503	0	0	0	
Contribution from BFC	253	0	253	0	0	0	
TOTAL - Schools Budget	114,745	-112,815	1,930	-284	3,110	2,826	
<u>Note on Unallocated Schools Budget balance:</u>							
Opening unringfenced balance on Schools Budget						141	
Budgeted over spending on the HNB						1,536	
2020-21 forecast in-year net variance						2,826	
Net forecast deficit at 31 March 2020						4,503	

SEND Commissioning Plan for Children and Young People

2020-2022



Contents

Vision and Principles	3
Joint Working and Engagement	5
Currently Commissioned Services	6
• Universal Commissioned Support	7
• Early Intervention and Targeted Support	8
• Specialist Services	9
Next Steps for Commissioning	13
• Priorities	14
Glossary	15
Appendix A – Feedback Extracts	16
Appendix B – Joint Participation Outcomes	17
Appendix C – Commissioned Services	18

Summarising our Priorities

An evidence base has provided the foundation for our priorities. These are intended to significantly change the landscape of strategic commissioning of SEND provisions for Bracknell Forest children and young people. The full priorities are outlined on page 14 in the key areas of:

- Early intervention and information availability.
- Targeted support for alternative provision and school access to provisions.
- Specialist support for complex placements and children looked after.
- Comprehensive pathways for increasingly prevalent needs: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

Overlapping areas of work

Since 2015, NHS England has asked Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to develop local transformation plans for Children and Young People's Mental Health (CYPMH). Through this work there has and continues to be additional investment in resources to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing across the "whole system" including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



The Plan

This commissioning plan will clearly set out our strategic intentions to achieve effective commissioning for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and their families and carers. Children with SEND require support from a range of agencies and so Bracknell Forest Council has developed this plan through workshops and consultation. Included were representatives across children's services, adults and children's social care, schools and critically, our health partners in the East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Parents, carers, children and young people have all been vital in developing our understanding of provisions and establishing our priorities for action.

This plan is based on a foundation of evidence including a SEND needs and sufficiency analysis and alternative provision review. It is further guided by the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years and the Children's and Families Act. Our ambitious priorities provide a clear direction for the activities of the commissioning team over the next two years.

This plan aims to:

- Provide an **evidence based** approach to identifying and prioritising the key commitments for commissioning.
- Provide a framework for **effective joint working** across education, health and social care at all stages of the commissioning cycle.
- Identify practical **targets and actions** to develop SEND provisions and commissioning practice across all levels of support.

Our vision for children with SEND is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives. This means that they fulfil their ambitions and the best possible educational and other outcomes, including employment and independent living where possible.

Principles

In 2014, the new SEND Code of Practice and Children and Families Act was introduced. Both emphasise the importance of joint planning and commissioning as well as the involvement of young people and their families. These requirements are reflected in the principles of our approach to commissioning provisions for SEND.

Our commissioning principles are to:

1. **Involve** children and young people and their families to develop inclusive services in line with the SEND Strategy.
2. Be **outcome focused** to drive greater value for money, choice, quality and capacity of SEND provisions within Bracknell Forest, helping to reduce out of borough placements.
3. Encourage **inclusion** in a range of settings for all children and young people.
4. Ensure that services are available to support children and young people through all **transitions** points including the pathways to adulthood and independence.

Context

Commissioning in Bracknell Forest

Commissioning is the process of understanding the local needs and resources, sourcing the most appropriate provisions and monitoring this in a structured way. Commissioning at Bracknell Forest Council is evolving with a newly created People Commissioning Service. This has provided dedicated capacity to developing a robust approach to commissioning. The service has teams for Children's and Adults strategic commissioning as well as Integration.

The ambition is to be outcomes focused, to provide a range of high quality services and to deliver value for money. At all stages of commissioning, the inclusion of service users is central to delivering the outcomes. The focus on all life stages is key on helping to ensure good transitions throughout pathways.

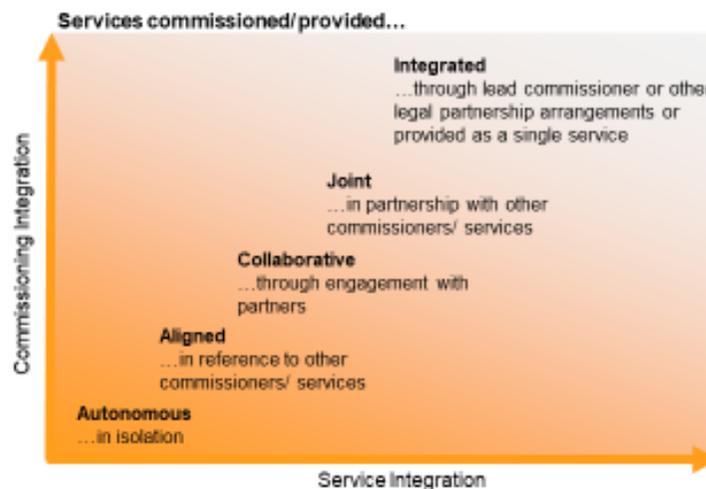
SEND support and placements are currently commissioned in a range of ways:

- Across the East Berkshire locality for services such as occupational therapy
- Spot purchased educational residential placements
- Jointly commissioned across partners e.g. Sensory needs and equipment
- The children's community 0-19 service commissioned by Public Health

Our Ambition for Commissioning Integration

Our ambition is to commission jointly, where appropriate, across partners and stakeholders in education, health and social care to deliver our vision. Services in Bracknell Forest are currently delivered and commissioned in a range of ways and this plan helps us to set out joint priorities and provide a route-map for how we will further develop through collaboration and joint working. This shows a recognition and support for integrated pathways and services that ensure the right care is offered at the right time and place.

As part of strengthening our approach to SEND services we are working with partners to develop our governance. This will provide the framework for delivering improvements to SEND commissioning.



Joint Working and Engagement

Joint Working

Working jointly with health, education and social care partners is vital to delivering comprehensive SEND provisions. This ensures the most effective response to a child's needs can be identified. It allows us to better understand the needs and the market to maximise the impact of our resources. Through working jointly and commissioning services together, we aim to develop a holistic approach to supporting children or young people, and to develop more efficient and effective service provisions.

A SEND Joint Working Agreement has been developed to outline the working relationship between the NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the local authority. The agreement operates across East Berkshire. This will add strength to the future joint working arrangements.

Engagement has taken place with a variety of partners and service users at different stages of the plan development. Outlined are the participants involved and the subsequent outcomes that have supported in the creation of this plan.

	Groups	Outcomes
Evidence for Plan	Data was provided from specific teams for exclusion information, financial trends and through the specialist provisions at College Hall and Kennel Lane School. Nationally validated data was also used where possible, sourced from the SEN2 return and the schools census.	Key areas of growing demand were identified. Further detail is provided in the following pages however the key themes were the growing pressure on services for children and young people with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASD; Autism Spectrum Disorder • SEMH; Social Emotional and Mental Health needs • Alternative Provision needs
Providers Engagement	During the early development of this plan we sought to understand the current experience of sourcing SEND provisions. Participating groups were also asked to consider how commissioning could better support their work. These discussions took place with the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal teams such as education services, adults and children's social care. • Headteachers through the Schools Forum • The CCG 	A number of priorities were identified including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing consistency for sourcing and monitoring placements, particularly for out of borough placements. • Increasing the scope of provisions available, particularly for more specialist needs such as SEMH. • Improving clarity for available provisions and how these can be commissioned. • Developing locally available provision including improving the opportunity to place primary school pupils at specialist provisions such as Kennel Lane School, College Hall or suitable alternatives.
User Engagement	We worked with the Parent Carer Forum, mainstream and special school pupils and young people with the CCG to understand the experience of children and young people and their views on what is important to them about the support that they receive. This helped us to identify further gaps in provision and will inform how future provisions are established.	We identified the following as some of the most important things to children and young people and their parents and carers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on early intervention for needs. • To have choices and be involved in decisions as an equal. • To have all the information available and accessible including information for suitable provisions, transport policy, exclusions etc. Further extracts are provided in appendix A and B.

Currently Commissioned Services

A range of services are available to children and young people with SEND. These are commissioned by Bracknell Forest and partners to provide comprehensive support across different levels of need.

The next section of this plan identifies the currently available provisions at each level of need. It includes an overview of the services provided with further details in appendix C.

Universal services are available to the whole population. Targeted support and early intervention describes provisions available to children and young people who have some additional needs. Specialist support describes the available provisions for those with diagnoses or complex needs.



Commissioning responsibility for children's health and care services is currently fragmented which is why an integrated approach is being developed to reduce confusion, ensure oversight and provide assurance for all services for children and young people with SEND.

Current commissioning responsibilities are summarised as follows:

CCG	Bracknell Forest Council	NHS England
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety and Depression Clinic (Reading University) Community Paediatric Nursing Services Community Paediatrics Continuing Health Care Specialist Community Nursing Service Health Needs of Looked After Children** Occupational Therapy* Physiotherapy Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Speech and Language Therapy* Wheelchair provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service Alternative Provision Approaching Adulthood Team Autism Outreach Services Behaviour Support Team Child Development Centre Children and young people sexual health services Children's centre provision Commissioning placements Occupational Therapy* Sensory Needs Support Short Breaks Speech and Language Therapy* Support for Learning Youth Health Champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Services for Young Offenders – Forensic CAMHS, Liaison and diversion. Immunisation and vaccination Specialist paediatric care Tier 4 CAMHS
Collaborative Commissioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autism and ADHD pre/post assessment support CAMHS (early intervention – Getting Help Teams, in place April 2020 – fully operational September 2020) Digital online emotional health support and counselling Youth Counselling Bracknell Forest Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) 		

*Part commissioned by the LA and NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (see appendix C)

**Health needs of Children Looked After are also provided via school nurses and commissioned through Public Health

Universal Commissioned Support



In Bracknell Forest there are many services which are part of the Local Authority offer for Universal Support to Children and Young People and their families with SEND. The in-house services include Family Hubs and these are critical to providing early identification and support for early years. However, there are additional services that are commissioned, these provide information, advice and guidance and there is a particular focus on emotional well-being and mental health. Many of these are commissioned through Public Health and NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group and include a comprehensive 0-19 offer as well as a developing digital offer for emotional wellbeing and mental health.

These Universal Services include:

0-19 Public Health Nursing Service

The health visiting service includes health and development reviews, screening, immunisations, social and emotional development, support for parenting and health promotion. The school health service works in partnership with children, young people and their families across schools and community settings to ensure their physical and mental health needs are supported. An enhanced support is offered for those most in need working closely with other services. (This service is provided by BHFT)

Digital Online Emotional Health Support and Counselling *

There is an online counselling and emotional wellbeing platform for those aged 11 to 19 years jointly commissioned between the Local Authority and the NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). By April 2019 over 3,300 children and young people had registered to this service since April 2015. (This service is provided by Kooth).

THRIVE! is a new children and young people's health and wellbeing website that brings together information on children and young people's physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Youth Counselling*

The youth counselling service provides confidential one-on-one, face-to-face counselling in the community in Bracknell Forest for children and young people aged 12–19. In addition, the service works with a small number of young adults up to the age of 25 and with parents, carers and those who support young people in different ways. (This service is provided by Youthline)

Autism and ADHD Pre/Post Assessment Support*

The Autism and ADHD Pre/Post Assessment Support provides a range of elements of support covering early signs, pre and post assessment of Autism and ADHD for children and young people age 0-25. The service will provide a range of opportunities including a navigating/signposting role, support workshops for families and contributing to the development and updating of an autism toolbox. Bracknell Forest also offer support to Adults post-diagnosis.

Youth Health Champions

The Youth Health Champions programme is accredited by the Royal Society of Public Health. The lead for the organisation is Bracknell Forest Council Public Health and this is currently delivered in 3 Bracknell Forest schools, by September 2020 this will be delivered to all Bracknell Forest schools.

The project aims to:

1. Deliver a young people's led peer education emotional wellbeing programme
2. Form a co-production network to support peer engagement, communication and service design and commissioning

* Some of these services will expand into Early Intervention work



Early Intervention and Targeted Support



The commissioning of early intervention and targeted support is currently complex across education, health and social care. There are a range of established services for children whose needs range from mild and moderate SEN through to those that may have EHCPs and includes short breaks, our equipment services and sensory needs consortium. There is an ambition to develop a more integrated approach with commissioning here across education and health – particularly around therapies and emotional well-being and mental health through our ambitious Local Transformation Plan.

Our Early Intervention and Targeted Support Services include:

Child Development Centre

The service supports children under 5 years old with additional needs. Services are tailored to meet the need of the child and family and include assessments, parent/carer groups, parent workshops, home visits and advice and guidance. Approximately 150 children access the service per year. Training for early years practitioners is also delivered, some co-delivered with health colleagues.

Sensory Needs Support

This service supports children and young people with sensory impairment to attend their local school. During the 2018-19 academic year, 98 Bracknell Forest pupils received support from the Sensory Consortium Service.

Short Breaks

Play and Leisure Scheme - A targeted Saturday and Holiday Club is provided for children and young people, aged 8-18, who have moderate to high needs and require significant support. Kids Play and Leisure Scheme organise 20 Saturday sessions and 40 Holiday sessions a year. From April 2019 - September 2019 a total of 49 children and young people attended at least one Saturday session and 85 children and young people attended holiday sessions.

Inclusion Fund - This service provides funding for 1:1 support at mainstream activities. It is available for children up to the age of 18 who reside in Bracknell Forest and would otherwise be prevented from taking part.

Getting Help Teams

Across Bracknell Forest through the Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health (CYPMH) we are developing a more comprehensive CAMHS offer and investing additional funding into providing support earlier through dedicated mental Health Practitioners – through Getting Help Teams. These teams are employed by Berkshire Healthcare but will form part of the Early Help offer through Bracknell Forest Council.

The teams will offer interventions, advice and signposting, and supporting children, young people and families with getting help with emerging mental health difficulties. It will also help link families, professionals and local communities to risk support and getting more help from specialist mental health services when difficulties are acute, severe and/or enduring. The teams will be in place April 2020 and will be fully-operational by September 2020.



Specialist Services



Some specialist services are provided in-house, some are statutory through social care such as the Children's Behaviour Support Team. However there are other services commissioned that are not provided in-house which include:

Occupational Therapy

The community paediatric occupational therapy (OT) service is delivered across East Berkshire. This service has seen a large increase in referrals between 2014 and 2018 leading to longer waiting times for assessment. The increase in demand has been particularly prevalent for referrals as part of the EHC assessment process. (This service is provided by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)

Physiotherapy

Specialists assess and treat children and young people who have difficulties that affect movement and physical development. The service is goal focused to develop gross motor skills, and provides advice on postural needs, mobility (including walking) and specialist equipment such as seating, standing equipment, mobility aids and splints. (This service is provided by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)

Speech and Language Therapy

The service is based on an early intervention and a whole school approach. All schools receive training and input from the speech and language therapy services for speech, language and communication approaches. During the 2018-19 financial year, 257 children attended drop-in sessions at early help centres across the borough. (This service is provided by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)

Future Integrated Therapy Arrangements

Therapies commissioning is complex and fragmented in parts with significant waits for some children and young people. There is a commitment across all East Berkshire partners to review and explore the development of an Integrated Therapies service across East Berkshire to modernise service delivery, improve quality and outcomes. Bracknell Forest Council is showing its commitment to this joint work by providing the lead resource to this project.

Specialist CAMHS

Berkshire Healthcare provide specialist child and adolescent mental health services. These include support, advice, guidance and treatment for children and young people (aged up to 18) with moderate/severe mental health difficulties, whose symptoms have a significant impact on their day-to-day lives. Usually, these symptoms will have been occurring over several months and will not have responded to interventions from prevention and early intervention services, such as youth counselling and behaviour support, evidence-based parenting or treatment from primary mental health practitioners. Children and young people (CYP) being seen by Berkshire Healthcare CAMHS will often need ongoing support from these and other services provided by the LA, alongside more specialist mental health care.

The Specialist CAMHS are made up of the following :

- Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Health Hub (CAMHS Common Point of Entry, or CPE)
- CAMHS rapid response team (RRT) (crisis care)
- ADHD pathway
- Autism assessment team
- CBT service for anxiety and depression
- Community early intervention in psychosis (EIP) service
- Community eating disorders service (BEDS CYP)
- Locality specialist community team for young people with complex mental health difficulties

Dietetic Service

Specialist dietitians offer advice on feeding and nutrition for children who might not be able to eat all the nutrients they need. The service is commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Alternative Provision



Alternative Provision

Alternative provision supports the duty that all children and young people have a right to 25 hours of education per week. It is education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education. This takes place outside of mainstream settings.

A review was completed and to understand the current needs and practice for using alternative provisions within the borough. A wide range of actions were suggested within the review to develop provisions, this has been used to inform the commissioning priorities outlined in this plan.

Several pressures on alternative provisions were identified including that College Hall is the only pupil referral unit within Bracknell Forest. Pupils were most likely to be referred for support in a managed move to prevent permanent exclusion. Mental health was also a likely reason for referral. 70% of placements at College Hall lasted between one term and three terms, with 30% of placements lasting more than four terms.

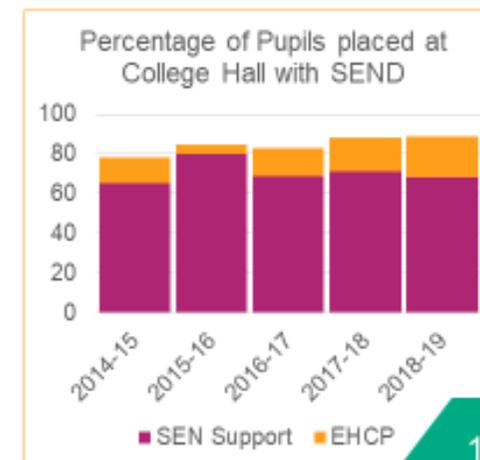
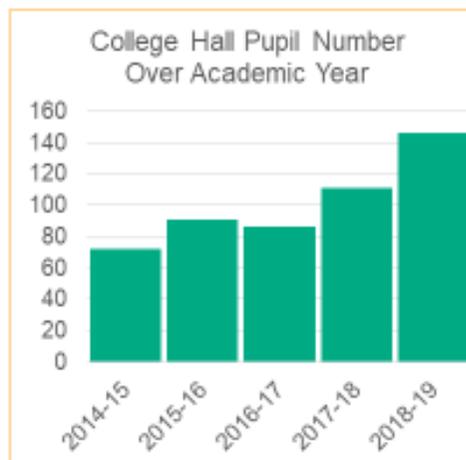
Some of the key challenges identified for alternative provisions are:

- The rising demand for College Hall places
- The lack of timely access to mental health support
- The limited support for pupil reintegration
- The increasing number of exclusions
- The lack of specialist provision for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs
- The current offer for support services from the council

Recommendations

The report identified the following actions as priorities across education and commissioning:

- Developing coherent Social, Emotional and Mental Health pathways
- Identifying needs early and consistently for SEN Support
- Understanding the changing needs of the cohorts to meet future demand
- Developing provisions for nursery and early years
- Developing post 16 provisions and pathways
- Developing relationships with other agencies such as health services/ CAMHS
- Reviewing the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for College Hall and relationship with Social, Emotional and Mental Health provisions



Needs Analysis: EHCP Placements



SEND Needs and Sufficiency Analysis

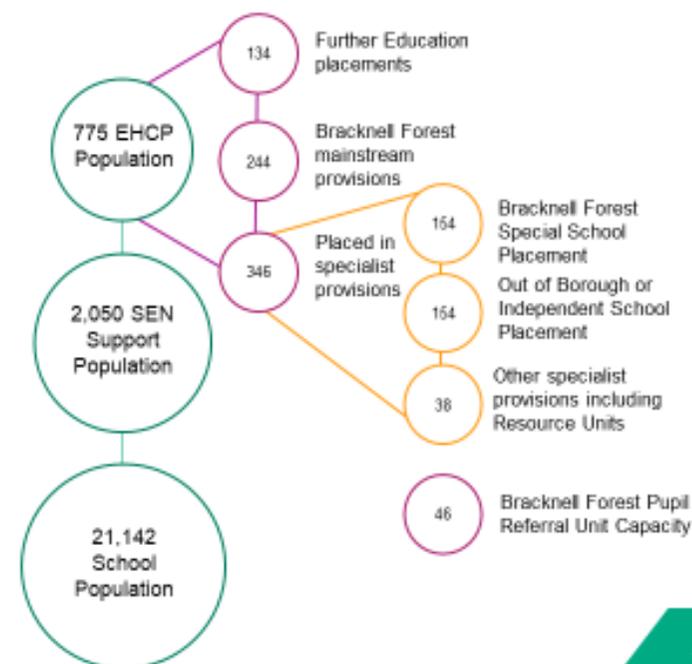
An analysis was completed to develop the understanding across the organisation and with our partners for the profile of SEND within the borough and the current placements of our children. The whole school population was considered in relation to SEND including children and young people with EHCPs, those who have recognised SEN but no formal assessment and the wider cohorts that may require alternative provision during their education. The [full analysis](#) can be accessed through our Local Offer page.

This identified a number of trends for areas of growth and cost increases resulting in several themes highlighted as particular pressures. These formed the basis for our commissioning priorities. A summary of the data within these key themes are:

EHCP Population	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	This group are proportionally larger in Bracknell Forest than the national average. There are no specialist resource provisions for primary school ASD. There are 25 children and young people living in other boroughs with ASD who attend Bracknell Forest schools.
	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	This group are proportionally larger in Bracknell Forest than the national average. Of children looked after pupils with an EHCP, half have the primary need of SEMH, increasing the complexity of need. Spend on SEMH provisions has increased by 83% in the last three years.
	Out of Borough	ASD and SEMH are the most common needs to be placed outside the borough. More than 50 pupils with an EHCP are placed across three out of borough schools. Spend has significantly increased along with associated transport costs.
SEN Support	SEN Support	Pupils identified for SEN support are disproportionately like to be excluded from their mainstream provisions. Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLDs i.e. dyslexia) are the most common secondary school need. Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SCLN) are the most common primary school need.

Summary of current SEND placements.

Children and young people with an EHCP are placed where the most appropriate level of support can be provided. The majority are located in specialist provisions. Limited provisions within the borough mean that many placements are commissioned externally.



Needs Analysis: Placement Spend

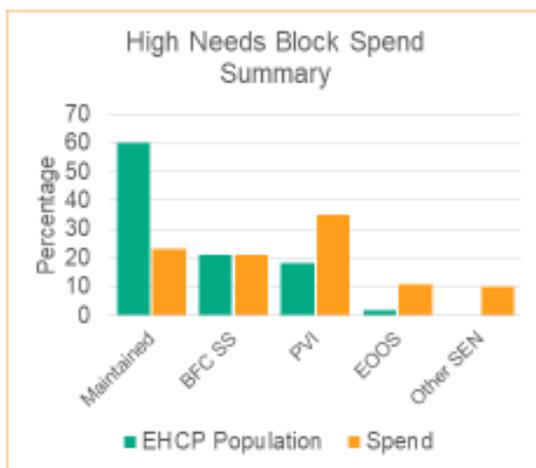
*Average expected placement cost based on provision type for EHCP children and young people in 2019-20



Understanding the costs for current provision

A large proportion of SEND services are funded through the High Needs Block. The High Needs Block is funding dedicated to education, support and services for Children and Young People with SEND. It covers the cost of placements for children and young people with an EHCP in addition to a range of services including for those who have been excluded, alternative provisions, home tuition and hospital education. It can also be used as "top-up" funding for children and young people with SEND as requested by mainstream schools.

The largest proportion of this spend is for placements at non-maintained and independent special schools. These include many of the out-of-borough specialist placements. For each of these placements, there is also an associated transport cost.



Maintained: Maintained schools and academies

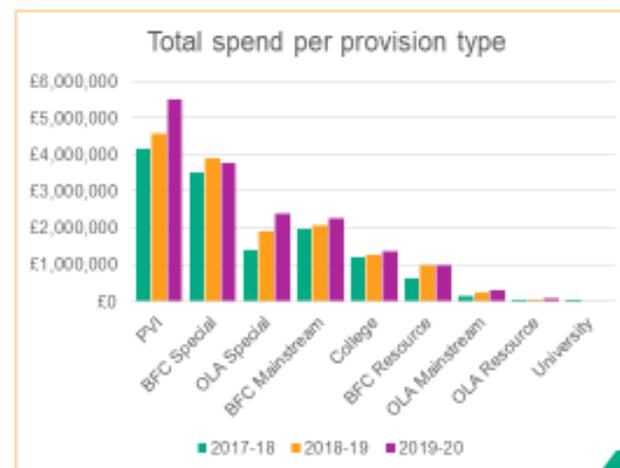
BFC SS: Bracknell Forest Special School

PVI: Non-maintained special schools or independent school

EOOS: Education Outside of School

Other SEN: and support services (usage numbers for EHCP population are not recorded)

Bracknell Forest	Average cost per placement*
Mainstream	£11,300
Resource	£22,200
Special School	£24,400
Other Local Authority	
Mainstream	£10,900
Resource	£15,500
Special School	£29,900
Other providers	
Private, Voluntary and Independent	£53,200
Higher Education College	£13,300



See Glossary (Page 15) for acronyms

Next Steps for Commissioning

The data collected in the previous section has provided an overview of current provisions and needs which enables the identification of the new priorities. The priorities set out the direction for developing strategic commissioning over the next two years.

In order to deliver these priorities, the governance arrangements have also been considered. This will allow the effective delivery and monitoring of the priorities. An action plan will now be developed in consultation with key partners to prioritise resources.



Commissioning Priorities

Across all levels of support, we will deliver on our principles to establish clear transition planning for pathways to adulthood and post 16 placements. Services will be commissioned inclusively with the voice of children and young people.
 We will work with providers to create greater choice, value for money, quality and capacity of SEND provisions. Our contracts will be reviewed to ensure they align with the 0-25 age range defined in the SEND Code of Practice. The monitoring data received will be further developed to understand local services.

Universal Support

We will work collaboratively within Bracknell Forest Council and with partners to:

- Improve the information for families and schools on available provisions through the local offer webpage and through the commissioned Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS).
- Review and develop our 0 - 19 health provisions.

We will work with providers to:

- Improve access, coverage and quality provision across universal services.

Early intervention and Targeted Support

We will work collaboratively within Bracknell Forest Council and with partners to:

- Develop commissioning to better equip schools with the skills to help SEN Support children and young people, working to promote inclusion and reduce escalation of needs.
- Review the information available to schools about the mechanisms for commissioning alternative provisions (AP).
- Review and explore options for the development of an East Berkshire Integrated Therapies service.
- Develop short breaks service and future commissioning.
- Develop the early help offer through provisions including the family hubs.

We will work with providers to:

- Develop a mixed market of provisions and expand the choice of AP providers for all age groups.
- Establish specifications with AP providers with clear routes for reintegration of children and young people to mainstream settings where appropriate
- Identify best practice for preventative and early support services.

Specialist Support

We will work collaboratively within Bracknell Forest Council and with partners to:

- Review residential placements for complex needs including those for children and young people under Child Protection or who are looked after.
- Review the transport arrangements and associated high costs for children primarily with EHCPs and support the work of the new Dynamic Purchasing system.

We will work with providers to:

- Develop the residential and support market in response to the emerging needs identified including SEMH and ASD.
- Explore effective routes to market for complex placements.

Defining new 0-25 pathways

Specific service pathways will be developed across all tiers for needs identified with significantly increasing prevalence and high placement costs.	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	This will include developing options for early help and specialist support for Children Looked After. The approach for commissioning SEMH placements outside the borough will be reviewed. Commissioning will support the development of in-borough specialist provisions for SEMH where currently there are none.
	Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD)	This will include developing support for families and schools prior to a diagnosis or EHCP. Developing additional capacity for primary school ASD provisions will be explored, meeting the existing gap. The approach for commissioning the high number of ASD placements outside the borough will be reviewed.



Glossary

Term	Definition	Term	Definition
AP	Alternative Provision	OLA	Other Local Authority
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	PD	Physical Disability
BFC	Bracknell Forest Council	PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent [schools]
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group	SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
EOOS	Education out of School	SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Need
HI	Hearing Impairment	SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
MEDICAL	Medical Needs (i.e. diabetes)	SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
MLD	Moderate Learning Disability	VI	Visual Impairment



Appendix A – Extracts of Feedback from Children and Young People



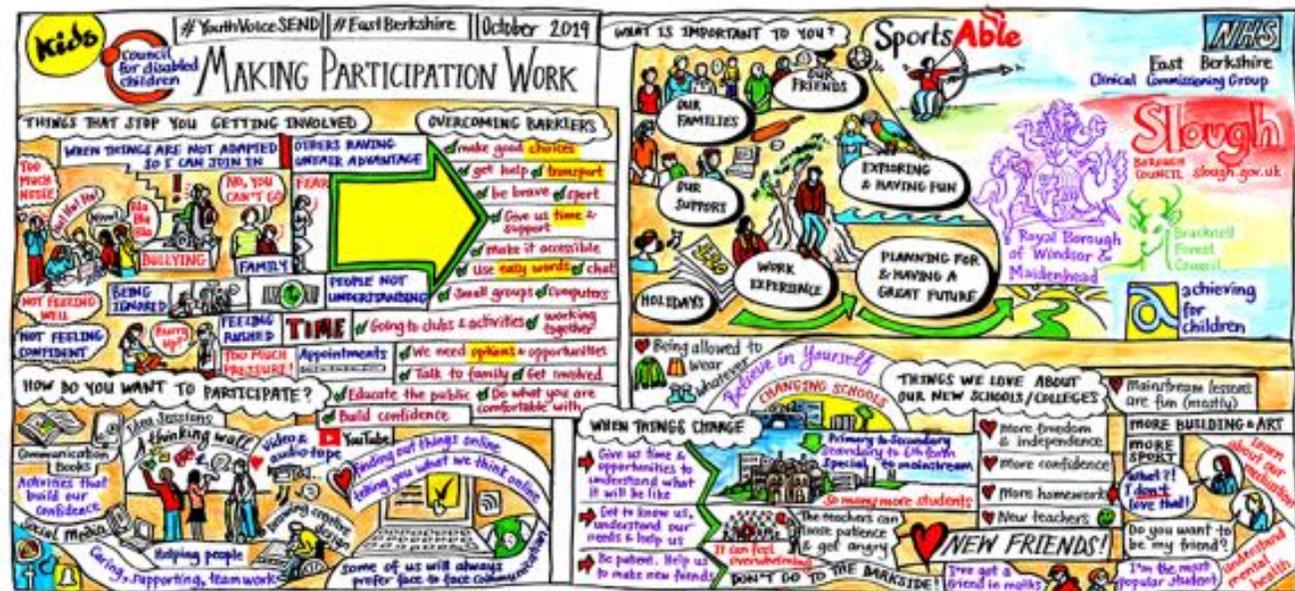
Appendix B – Joint SEND Participation Event Outcomes

October 2019

Local young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) came together, supported through their schools to attend a local event planned by Young Event Makers, who are local young people that are really passionate about helping other young people from schools really grasp the idea of participation and voicing change.

The event was facilitated by the children's charity Kids and the aim of the event was to gather feedback from SEND young people on how they'd like to shape services and policy decisions. A number of local professionals from across health and local authorities were also present to listen to views of the young people.

The event was hosted by NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group working in partnership with Bracknell Forest Council, Achieving for Children (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead), Slough Borough Council and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.



Making Participation Work in East Berkshire, Achieving for Children, Kids, Council for Disabled Children, SportsAble, October 2019. Graphic facilitation by www.pennenden.com ©MendoncaPen

As a result of this event NHS East Berkshire has set up a participation-leads network which will meet biannually and allow all the respective leads to share plans in relation to participation to ensure a more joined-up approach across the system. This includes professionals who are the leads for Bracknell Forest Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Young Health Champions, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Appendix C – Current Commissioned Pathway for 0-25 Services

Jointly Commissioned Services

	0-5 years (Early Years)	5-19 Years (Mainstream School)	Special Schools	Home Schooled and Independent Schools	Delivered by
Occupational Therapy 0-19 years	Initial assessment and various packages of intervention according to individual need.	Initial assessment and various packages of intervention according to individual need.	Whole school approach	Independent School Service - one off initial assessment, advice and strategies. Home Schooled Service for 0-19 years	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust
Speech and Language 0-25 years	Drop-ins at Children's Centres. Speech and Language Therapy post in-house to deliver training to Early Years staff. BHFT Early Communication Team and BHFT Complex Needs Team	Whole school approach for list of named mainstream schools and resources (up to 25 years)	Kennel Lane School – whole school approach	Independent School Service - one off initial assessment, advice and strategies	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust

		Ages covered	Delivered by
0-19 Public Health Nursing Service (Health Visiting 0-5 years and School Nursing 5-19 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandated health visiting checks for the mother and child in line with the healthy child programme and the use of evidenced based tools and assessments. Core school nursing service – routine screening, health needs assessments, targeted support School nurse offer includes Pupil Referral Unit provision. A school nurse is co-located within the Youth Offending team. 	Ages 0-19 years	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust
Digital Online Emotional Health Support and Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online self-referral access to counselling and wellbeing support. 	Ages 11-18, up to 25 for people with SEND and Care Leavers	Kooth (Xenzone)
Youth Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth counselling service provides confidential one-on-one, face-to-face counselling in the community in Bracknell Forest for children and young people 	Ages 12-25	Youthline
Bracknell Forest Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information, advice and support to children and young people and their parents/carers about matters relating to SEND. The service is free and confidential which is run at arms-length from the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups. Jointly commissioned by Education, Health and Social Care. Part funded by Council for Disabled Children. 	Ages 0-25	Bracknell Forest Council



Appendix C – Current Commissioned Pathway for 0-25 Services

CCG Commissioned Services

The main services can be seen below, however there is a more comprehensive list on page 5.

	0-5 years (Early Years)	5-19 Years (Mainstream School)	Special Schools	Home Schooled and Independent Schools	Delivered by
Physiotherapy 0-19 years	Initial assessment and various packages of intervention according to individual need.	Initial assessment and various packages of intervention according to individual need.	Kennel Lane School - whole school approach	Independent School Service - one off initial assessment, advice and strategies. Additional Home Schooled Service	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust

		Ages covered	Delivered by
Specialist CAMHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people psychological liaison can support under 5s in an acute setting. A range of specialist services support children, young people and adults up to age 25. This can also include acute settings. 	0-25 years	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust
Specialist Children's Nursing Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This service provides care and support for children and young people with complex health needs and learning difficulties. The provide respite care, community paediatricians and specialist nursing services. The team also support, advise, and provide training for parents and carers to meet the needs of their child at home, in respite and in educational settings. 	0-19 years	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust
Specialist Dietetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support pupils who have a range of issues affecting their eating and drinking; as well as their families, carers and school staff. 	0-19 years	Berkshire Healthcare (NHS) Foundation Trust



Appendix C – Current Commissioned Pathway for 0-25 Services

Bracknell Forest Services

		Ages covered	Delivered by
Approaching Adulthood Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of social care support required for adulthood and appropriateness for adults services. 	14-19 years	Bracknell Forest Council
Autism Outreach Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Support Service from specialist staff. 	5-19 years	Bracknell Forest Council
Behaviour Support Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Specialist consultation, training and direct work with pupils. 	5-19 years	Bracknell Forest Council
Child Development Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for families through multi-professional assessments, support groups, workshops, home learning and advice. 	0-5 years	Bracknell Forest Council
Sensory Need Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to a range of sensory specialist skills and expertise including resource base Special Schools have access to Visiting Teacher Service with half termly visits from HI and VI Specialist Teacher. 	0-19 years	Sensory Consortium Service – hosted at RBWM
Short Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion fund to support attendance at mainstream activities. Leisure scheme for children and young people with complex needs. 	3-18 years	Inclusion fund: Various Providers Leisure Scheme: Kids
Support for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Support for Learning Service provides a team of specialist teachers who are available to assess and directly teach children with special educational needs. 	5-19 years	Bracknell Forest Council

SEND Commissioning Action Plan – 2020-22

1 VERSION: 2.0 (UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2020)

2 SUMMARY OF SEND COMMISSIONING PLAN PRIORITIES

PRIORITY	TASKS
<p>1. Review governance and decision-making around the current SEND panel processes, intervention hub and high needs funding allocation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Formal consultation with stakeholders regarding proposed changes to SEND decision-making processes / intervention hub / high needs funding levels and governance b) Refine and develop the proposals based on feedback from consultation to develop a final set of proposals c) Gain appropriate approvals and proceed towards phased implementation of the agreed proposals from September 2021
<p>2. Developing the market for SEND / Alternative Provision (AP) & Support</p>	<p>SEND Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Launch Expression of Interest (EOI) for primary age ASD specialist resourced provision e) Launch Statutory Consultation Process for approved sites f) Implementation– primary age ASD specialist resourced provision g) Start-Up phase – Launch new provisions <p>Alternative Provision (AP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Establish specifications with AP providers with clear routes for reintegration of children and young people to mainstream settings where appropriate i) Review the information available to schools about the mechanisms for commissioning alternative provisions (AP)

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j) Review residential placements for complex needs including those for children and young people under Child Protection or who are looked after k) Explore effective routes to market for complex placements
<p>3. Creating a level playing field for inclusion & Supporting Continuing Professional Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> l) Develop commissioning to better equip education providers with the skills to help SEN Support children and young people, working to promote inclusion and reduce escalation of needs m) Improve access, coverage and quality provision across universal services n) Define new 0-25 pathways - Develop new provision to fill identified gaps in the market in response to the emerging needs identified including Social Emotional & Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
<p>4. Preparation for Adulthood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o) Work with multi-agency partners develop a wider range of robust Preparation for Adulthood pathways, including improved access to health, independent living and supported employment options to ensure young people with SEND make successful transitions to adult life
<p>5. Joint Commissioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> p) Develop a jointly agreed and co-produced approach to commissioning services, across health, social care and education reflecting best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review and develop Bracknell's 0 - 19 health provisions ii. Review and explore options for the development of an East Berkshire Integrated Therapies service
<p>6. Early Help & Short Breaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> q) Identify best practice for preventative and early support services r) Develop the early help offer through provisions including the family hubs s) Develop short breaks service and future commissioning

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

7. SEND Local Offer & Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)

t) Improve the information for families and schools on available provisions through the local offer webpage and through the commissioned Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS)

3 SEND COMMISSIONING PLAN ACTIVITIES

1. Review & Reform governance and decision-making around the current SEND panel processes, intervention hub and high needs funding allocation

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE-HOLDERS	TIMETABLE & MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
a) Formal consultation with stakeholders regarding proposed changes to SEND decision-making processes / intervention hub / high needs funding levels and governance	See detail in embedded document here:  High Needs Funding Reform	Service Lead: SEN and Inclusion & Paul Clark	Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021	Final set of proposals with consensus and agreement on adoption
b) Refine and develop the proposals based on feedback during consultation to develop a final set of proposals for presentation to Schools Forum	Circulation of suite of documents as above accompanied by workshops / meetings / online consultation to capture feedback leading to further refinement of proposals	Service Lead: SEN & Paul Clark	April 2021	Final set of proposals with consensus and agreement on adoption
c) Proceed towards phased implementation of the agreed proposals	Indicative allocations against new high needs bandings issued to Providers New Banding System comes into force – Transitional Protection arrangements* for Special Schools / PRU / Specialist Settings	Service Lead: SEN and Inclusion & Paul Clark	April 2021 September 2021	Final approved BFC model of SEND decision making, high needs funding matrix, panel and placement processes and agreed timescales for implementation

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

2. Developing the market for SEND / Alternative Provision (AP) & Support				
PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE-HOLDERS	TIMETABLE & MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
2f) SEND Development Programme				
d) Launch Expression of Interest (EOI) for primary age ASD specialist resourced provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of EOI - 9th October 2020 Schools / Academies submission of bids – Deadline 20th November 2020 Selection & award of successful bidders – by 4th December 2020 	Emma Ferrey Kashif Nawaz Schools Finance	Autumn Term 2020	Sites and schools identified for new SEN Resourced Provision
e) Launch Statutory Consultation Process for approved sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following DfE guidelines for prescribed alterations if maintained school, similar process if academy - 6 week consultation period – 11th December to 22nd January (allowing 2 week break over Xmas) Post consultation review and decision – early February 2021 SLA awarded and signed by end of February 2021 	Emma Ferrey	Spring Term 2021	Consultation complete and SLAs awarded
f) Implementation & Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adaptations or minor capital works Staff recruitment & development of policies and procedures Launch dates tbc – potential for transition planning to commence after Easter 2021 Opening dates no later than September 2021 	Emma Ferrey	Launch by September 2021	Sites prepared and ready to open by September 2021
g) Start-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide start-up support and advice to settings opening the 	Mandy	Between	Schools setting up

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

<p>phase – Launch new provisions</p>	<p>new SEN / AP provisions as set out in the Service Level Agreement / Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start-up support to continue for 12 months from initial opening. 	<p>Wimbush/E PS</p>	<p>September 2021 to July 2022 - Depending on individual project timetable</p>	<p>new SEND provision feel well supported and confident in the process.</p>
<p>2g) Developing the market for SEND / Alternative Provision (AP) & Support</p>				
<p>h) Establish specifications with AP providers with clear routes for reintegration of children and young people to mainstream settings where appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build on the work of the AP review to establish the Quality Assurance framework for AP provision in use by the area's schools ○ Development of the SEMH Hub to inform best practice and enhance the offer of outreach to the area's schools 	<p>TBC</p>	<p>2020-21</p>	<p>Increased clarity around support service offer between schools and from the council.</p> <p>Improved success rates around pupil reintegration to mainstream.</p>
<p>i) Review the information available to schools about the mechanisms for commissioning alternative provisions (AP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to develop and enhance the AP commissioning Framework building on the existing 'Can-Do' structures 	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Autumn Term 2020</p>	<p>Ensure more consistency across BF for pupils accessing AP and minimise use of provision not on QA framework</p>

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

<p>j) Review residential placements for complex needs including those for children and young people under Child Protection or who are looked after</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalise EHCP Annual Review process with regards to LA involvement and monitoring and quality assurance of provision for the most vulnerable learners ○ Agree prioritisation matrix for EHCP Annual Reviews to identify the most vulnerable pupils including LAC and CYP under Child Protection) ○ Develop integrated approach incorporating feedback from EHCP annual reviews into commissioning cycle to inform transition planning and development of provision 	<p>AR and placement monitoring officer</p>	<p>Spring Term 2021</p>	<p>Establish improved integrated approach to EHCP Annual Reviews for complex placements to ensure these provide VFM and the best outcomes for CYP</p>
<p>k) Explore effective routes to market for complex placements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage with Health and Social Care colleagues locally to explore current arrangements as well as plans / options and appetite for collaboration ○ Engage with Sub-Regional partners (neighbouring LAs) to explore plans and options and appetite for collaboration ○ This will include an options appraisal regarding provider frameworks including sub-regional models, Dynamic Purchasing Systems as well as block contracts with volume providers ○ The approach for commissioning SEMH placements outside the borough will be reviewed. ○ The approach for commissioning the high number of ASD placements outside the borough will be reviewed 	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Spring Term 2021</p>	<p>Establish improved integrated commissioning approach to complex placements to ensure these provide VFM and the best outcomes for CYP. Reduction in volume of inappropriate placement in independent sector</p>

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

3. Creating a level playing field for inclusion & Supporting Continuing Professional Development				
PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE-HOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
<p>l) Develop commissioning to better equip education providers with the skills to help SEN Support children and young people, working to promote inclusion and reduce escalation of needs</p> <p>&</p> <p>m) Improve access, coverage and quality provision across universal services</p>	<p>Launch of new SEND system including Provision Matrix (under priority activity 1) as part of wider changes to SEND system setting out expectations as to what schools in Bracknell Forest offer to learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The document sets out what is available at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Universal Provision ii. Targeted Provision (SEN Support) iii. High Needs Provision <p>Providing a foundation for all stakeholders ensuring consistency and transparency across BF. 'My Support Plan' will be implemented Autumn 2020 to support early identification and ensure support is provided and outcomes monitored</p>	<p>Service Lead: SEN</p> <p>Mandy Wimbush</p>	<p>Autumn Term 2020</p>	<p>~The document will help parents understand what schools will be doing and help SENCOs in schools think about what extra support might be relevant for learners who are not progressing at the rate they would expect.</p> <p>~Clarity for all stakeholders as to what schools and other settings should provide.</p>
<p>n) Defining new 0-25 pathways - Develop new provision to fill identified gaps in the market in response to the emerging needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o SEMH Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with Intervention Hub panel and other stakeholders including Clinical Commissioning Group to identify emerging themes in good practice and areas for development. ▪ Review existing CAN DO platform and outreach 	<p>Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP)</p>	<p>Development process: Autumn 2020 - Spring 2021</p> <p>Pathway</p>	<p>~Clear SEMH Pathway established with appropriate provision and support in place to</p>

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

3. Creating a level playing field for inclusion & Supporting Continuing Professional Development				
PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE-HOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
identified including SEMH and ASD.	<p>offers from College Hall and Behaviour Support Team to identify strengths, weaknesses gaps and duplication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Factor in proposed offer from new Getting Help Teams (CAMHS), starting in January 2021 ▪ Plan development of SEMH Hub to complement and enhance current offer ▪ Identify models of good practice from elsewhere ▪ Draw these elements up into a draft SEMH pathway proposal and consult with stakeholders. ▪ Review feedback and implement 		<p>launch: Summer 2021</p> <p>SEMH Hub launch September 2021</p>	<p>minimise the proportion of learners facing exclusion or requiring specialist placements.</p> <p>~Reduction in proportion of inappropriate independent sector placements for EHCP learners</p>

DRAFT

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

3. Creating a level playing field for inclusion & Supporting Continuing Professional Development

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE-HOLDERS	MILESTONE S	OUTCOMES
(n) - As above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ASD Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with stakeholders including Autism Support Team and The Rise to identify emerging themes in good practice and areas for development. ▪ Engage with colleagues in Clinical Commissioning Group to explore appetite for development of a more integrated offer. ▪ Review existing outreach offers from Kennel Lane School and Autism Support Team to identify strengths, weaknesses gaps and duplication ▪ Identify examples of good practice from elsewhere including jointly commissioned neurodevelopmental pathways ▪ Draw these elements up into a draft ASD pathway proposal and consult with stakeholders. ▪ Review feedback, update model accordingly and implement 	Mandy Wimbush	Development process: Autumn 2020 - Spring 2021 Pathway launch: Summer 2021	~Clear ASD Pathway established with appropriate provision and support in place to minimise the proportion of learners requiring specialist placements. ~Reduction in proportion of independent sector placements for EHCP learners

4. Preparation for Adulthood

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE-HOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
o) Work with multi-agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options regarding developing post 16 provisions and pathways 	Service Lead: SEN	TBC	~Improved access to support

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

4. Preparation for Adulthood

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE HOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
partners develop a wider range of robust Preparation for Adulthood pathways, including improved access to health, independent living and supported employment options to ensure young people with SEND make successful transitions to adult life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with current providers to understand the current offer and appetite for diversification, expansion and collaboration Engage with colleagues in Adult Services and Health (providers and commissioners) regarding transition pathways and protocols in order to clarify and improve access to services for the most vulnerable 			services (health and social care) for young adults aged 19-25 ~Wider range of post 16 options available to young people with SEND in Bracknell Forest

5. Joint Commissioning

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKE HOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
p) Develop a jointly agreed and co-produced approach to commissioning services, across health,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review and develop Bracknell's 0-19 health provisions Review and explore options for the 	BFC's Commissioning Team	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint commissioning arrangements will mean that gaps are identified and resources targeted CYP and families will

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

5. Joint Commissioning

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKEHOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
social care and education reflecting best practice	development of an East Berkshire Integrated Therapies service - Bracknell Forest Council is providing the lead resource to this joint project.			<p>experience services that reflect their identified needs and are more joined-up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments will happen more quickly and pathways of support will be clear to CYP and families. • CYP and their families will have a positive experience of the pathways with access to services improved so that support is provided at the point it is needed. • Improved timeliness of access to mental health support; • Wider range of specialist provision for CYP with SEMH.

6. Early Help & Short Breaks

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKEHOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
q) Identify best practice for	~Options exploration - Identify and	TBC	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshed early

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

<p>preventative and early support services</p> <p>And:</p> <p>r) Develop the early help offer through provisions including the family hubs</p>	<p>collate exemplars of best practice in early help nationally in relation to SEND;</p> <p>~Options Appraisal - Determine which of these has most practical and effective applicability to the BF context.</p> <p>~Drawing on options appraisal determine commissioning priorities for Early Help and implement these.</p> <p>~Clarify the early help offer, what is available currently and how is it accessed?</p> <p>~Publish the information on the Local Offer website</p>	<p>Led by Children's Social Care</p>		<p>help offer with clear linkages to SEND offer is promoted and widely understood by schools, settings and parent / carers</p>
<p>s) Develop short breaks service and future commissioning</p>	<p>~Review current Short Breaks offer through co-production with parents and young people</p> <p>~Drawing on co-production determine commissioning priorities for Short Breaks and implement these</p>	<p>Children with Disabilities Social Care Team</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Refreshed Short Breaks offer and access criteria is promoted and widely understood by parent / carers and other stakeholders.</p>

7. SEND Local Offer & IASS

PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	LEAD / KEY STAKEHOLDERS	MILESTONES	OUTCOMES
<p>t) Improve the information for families and schools on available provisions through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SEND Local Offer web-pages and IASS including comparisons with best practice elsewhere and feedback from service users 	<p>TBC</p> <p>Family Information Service Lead</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bracknell's SEND Local Offer web-pages provide an improved offering Benchmarking performance is shaped by

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

the local offer webpage and through the commissioned Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify strengths of current services as well as any issues and challenges experienced by service users• Identify actionable improvements to address shortcomings of current offer			feedback from service users (including website analytics)
---	--	--	--	---

DRAFT

APPENDICES

4 APPENDIX 1 – CURRENT CAPITAL PROPOSALS (AS AT AUGUST 2020)

PROJECT / PROPOSAL	CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCE	STATUS
a. The Harmanswater Primary Intervention Unit provision is now open (up to 10 places for pupils at Harmanswater).	Special Provision Capital Fund (& LA Funding)	This project is complete and opened on January 13 th 2020. Some aspects of governance will need to be retrospectively introduced for the benefit of all parties under yet to be confirmed Service Level Agreements.
b. Bracknell Open Learning Centre, Rectory Lane, Bracknell, RG12 7GR	Special Provision Capital Fund	This project is complete and opened on January 13 th 2020 creating a new learning kitchen to teach 19-25 year olds pupils in groups of 4 the skills they need to be independent in adulthood Some aspects of governance will need to be retrospectively introduced for the benefit of all parties under yet to be confirmed Service Level Agreements.
c. Brakenhale Secondary on their SEND Transition Classroom and Support project (up to 20 places)	Special Provision Capital Fund	Work has commenced on building adaptations - Due to be completed by April 2020.
d. Jennett's Park Primary Sensory and Dance Studio (up to 30 places).	Special Provision Capital Fund	Due to be completed by April 2020.
e. The Pines Primary SEN Unit (up to 15 places) is in development	Special Provision Capital Fund	Due to be completed by April 2020.
f. Fox Hill Primary Adaptations to the Nurture Group (up to 10 places)	Special Provision Capital Fund (& LA Funding)	This will commence once the pre-school has been relocated from the school site and suitable accommodation becomes available. This will be facilitated through the council's capital programme, with the new facility planned to be completed for September 2020.
g. The "Oasis" project – in partnership with Bracknell Parent Carer Forum	Special Provision	Funding agreed to develop a base for young people 19-25 with complex needs who cannot attend Bracknell /Wokingham College,

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

PROJECT / PROPOSAL	CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCE	STATUS
	Capital Fund	Berkshire College of Agriculture or Reading College as part of wider proposals for 'Preparation for Adulthood' offer.
h. New SEMH / AP Hub	LA Funding	Agreement in principle reached for development of an SEMH Hub providing some on-site places alongside a proactive specialist outreach offer to support mainstream schools with maintaining placement of pupils with SEMH needs.

DRAFT

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

5 APPENDIX 2 – RISK REGISTER

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	SEVERITY OF RISK 1 = Low 25 = Very High	MITIGATION
<p>Lack of clear written specification regarding levels of need / criteria for entry / admissions process for SEN provision may lead to dispute with School Leadership / Governing Bodies at a later stage, potentially delaying implementation or preventing settings from being fully utilised without conflict.</p> <p>In a worst case scenario this could lead to a school refusing to admit pupils and walking away from the agreement to host the provision and potentially lead to SPF capital being wasted. Given the potential for changes of school leadership such changes of strategic direction are likely.</p>	4	5	20	<p>Publish and consult on draft Service Level Agreement for Resourced Provision at the earliest opportunity, including descriptors of admission criteria, governance around admissions process, financial aspects of agreement, etc (as set out under Stage1.iii of the Capital Programme above).</p> <p>The approval process set out in the capital programme above requires all such details to be published as part of the statutory consultation process for each individual provision, which ensures that the proposals are widely understood and agreed and that the statutory protections for designated SEND provision become enforceable thus minimising any risks of dispute or difficulties around admissions.</p>
<p>Implementation of project plans prior to statutory consultation process presents a risk that at a later stage parents (or Governors) at the host school could raise reasonable objections to the development of the provision having not had the opportunity to express their views regarding its development. These objections could potentially gain local and political support and lead to widespread objections to the provision being opened again potentially leading to SPF capital being wasted.</p>	3	5	15	<p>Capital plans for some of the provisions listed under Appendix 1 are at an advanced stage of development and it may not be cost effective to delay implantation at this stage, but <i>it is critical that the process set out under Stage 2.iv of the Capital Programme above is implemented at the earliest opportunity</i> to minimise future risks.</p> <p>Any projects not a the implementation stage should wherever possible be delayed until the statutory consultation process is complete and approved through the appropriate governance set out above.</p>
<p>Schools establishing new SEN provision struggle in the early stages of</p>	3	4	12	<p>Ensure that specialist support for new settings is commissioned as part of the support offer in the start-</p>

1 BRACKNELL FOREST - SEND COMMISSIONING ACTION PLAN

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	SEVERITY OF RISK 1 = Low 25 = Very High	MITIGATION
implementation leading to challenges around placements or reputational damage at an early stage.				up phase of the new SEN provision in the delicate early stages. Ensure that new placements are staggered to ensure that the provision has the opportunity to grow organically and staff have time to find their feet as the first cohort are admitted.

DRAFT