

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 16th July 2020

**IMPROVING LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE OVER
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SUPPORT AND THE HIGH NEEDS FUNDING BLOCK
Executive Director: People**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report is an update on the proposal to deliver the Intervention Hub - a mechanism for children/young people to have prompt access to short-term additional *specialist* support from the High Needs Block without having to wait to go through an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan statutory needs assessment to access Element 3 'top up funding'. An extension to deliver the Intervention Hub from September '19 to March '20 was agreed by the Schools Forum following an initial trial between January and May 2019. This report presents the outcomes recorded for the Hubs held during Autumn '19 and Spring '20 terms.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **To NOTE the findings of the project and the outcomes recorded for the pupils supported through the Intervention Hub.**
- 2.2 **To NOTE proposal for going forward.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Intervention Hub was set up as a pilot multi-agency hub. The purpose of the Intervention Hub is to provide prompt, short-term and *specified* additional resource/support to children and young people through the High Needs Block, in the form of 'top-up funding'. Appropriate Intervention Hub referrals were resourced from the SEN Strategic Reserve.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION.

5.1.1 Background and context

Inclusion can be defined as increasing belonging, engagement and connection for pupils with SEND and support can be provided by the local authority to facilitate this. Inclusive practice equips staff with the skills, knowledge and experience they require to meet the needs of their pupils with SEND. This involves not only incorporating effective class-based support for age-equivalent learning to be acquired, but also providing enrichment activities outside of the classroom to develop additional skill areas that might require one to one teaching, or a wider physical environment. Funding is an essential key pre-requisite for successful inclusion.

- 5.1.2 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.

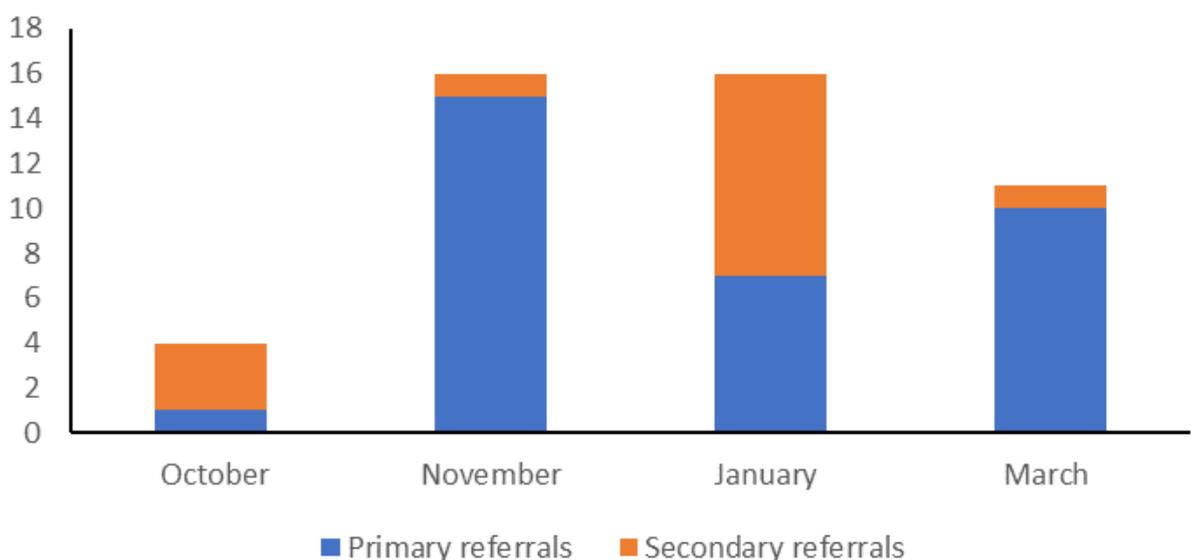
Additionally, HNB DSG is also intended to be used where high needs provisions are not arranged in the form of places e.g. specialist support for pupils with sensory impairments, or tuition for pupils not able to attend schools etc.

5.2 The Intervention Hub

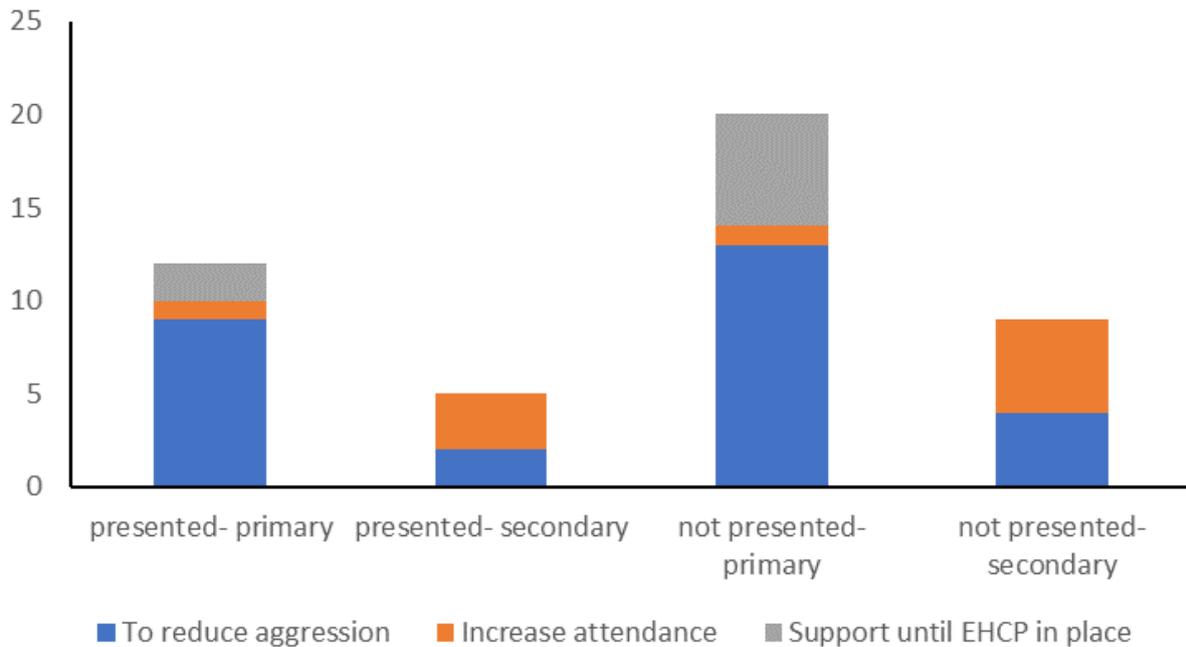
The intervention hub provides schools with a route to access resources through a simple and efficient process. This system involves a dialogue across a range of professionals including Educational Psychologists, Early Help professionals, Youth Offending service, Behaviour Support team, SEN Team, Autism Support service, Support for Learning, Safeguarding and Inclusion and external agencies. Individualised and flexible decision making has enabled schools to access a range of resources matched to the pupils needs. These are summarised below.

5.3 Number of Referrals per Phase, Context, Decisions and Outcomes

There were a total of 47 referrals received for the Intervention Hub over the Autumn ‘19 and Spring ‘20 Term (i.e. the period for which the Intervention Hub was extended for):



From the referrals received, a number were presented whilst others were not:

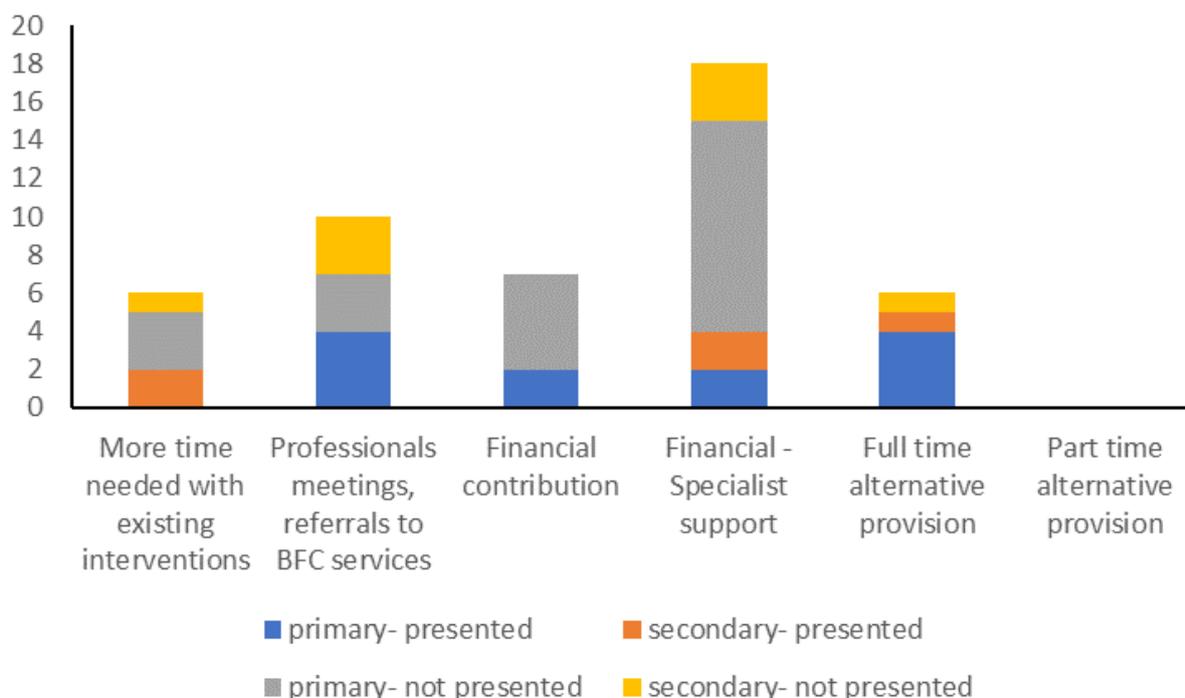


5.3.1 Decision to present

On receipt, all referrals were triaged to panel for consideration. Where appropriate, actions were allocated to panel members to ensure each school had a follow up on their referral, whether they presented or not. Also, where robust evidence was provided and it was clear that further delays would be at the detriment of the child/young person involved, support could be allocated without presentation at the formal meeting.

5.3.2 Context of Referral

The majority of referrals requested were to reduce challenging behaviour, specifically aggression that put the pupils, or others around them in harm. Some primary referrals requested financial support to allow their pupils to access the curriculum with an additional adult. The majority of secondary referrals were concerning pupils that were not attending school and required support to increase school attendance and engagement.



5.3.3 Referrals not selected for presentation at the hub were mainly asked to continue with previous advice and support as this had not yet been implemented. Six referrals received did not document full implementation of identified interventions and were advised to continue following prior recommendations at this stage before further resources were allocated.

5.3.4 In ten cases, schools were advised to convene either a professional’s meeting or a referral to LA services. This was generally because there was no evidence that the school had already considered such support available.

5.3.5 Six referrals had full time alternative provision agreed, no pupils were offered part time funded alternative provision as a result of their referral.

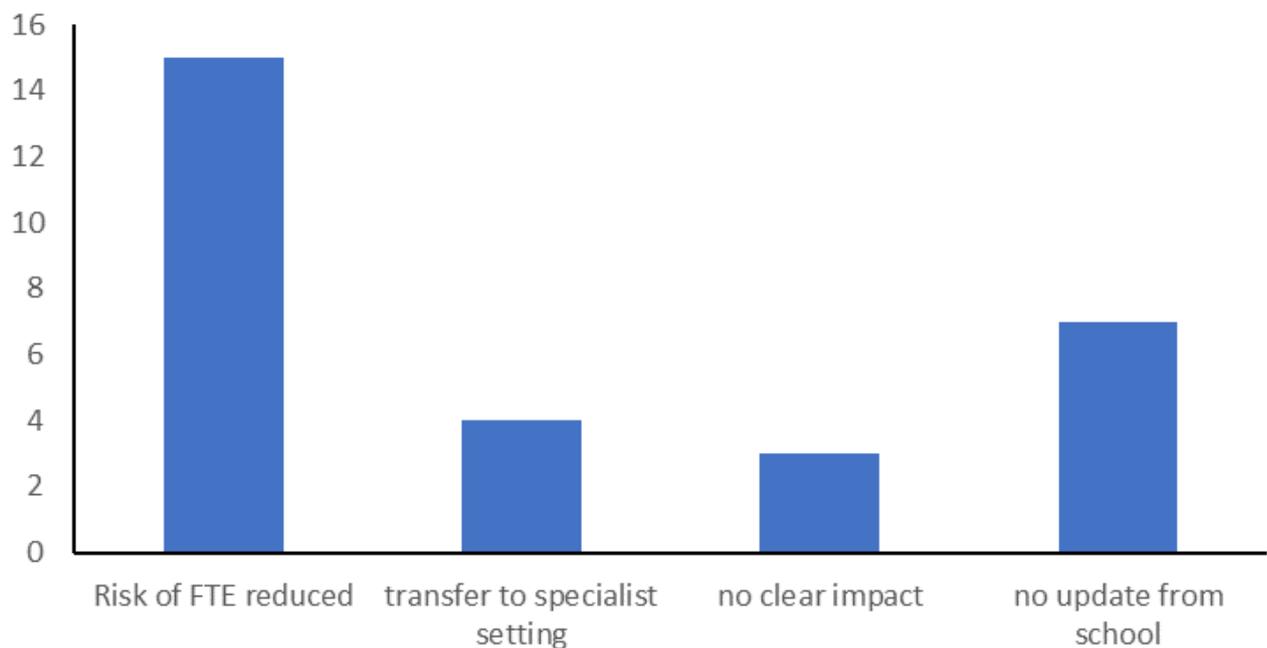
5.3.6 Funding allocations

A total of approximately £56k was allocated following referral to the Intervention Hub to support a total of 14 children and young people. £16k of this allocation were for two pupils who were supported from the Hub during the Summer Term ’19 pilot phase. The table below accounts for the remaining £40k and separates the cost of the specialist support provided, and the direct payments to school to fund a teaching assistant. A breakdown across each intervention hub and the timescales of the support is also provided.

Intervention Hub	Number of Weeks’ Support Provided			
	6 weeks		12 weeks	
	Specialist support (£)	TA funding (£)	Specialist support (£)	TA funding (£)
October			1875	4598
November	300		1375	6930.57
January	450	7295	3225	9137.86
March		2332.57	3313	
Total	£ 750	£9,627.57	£9,788	£20,666.43

Funding for the six places at alternative provision was provided from the primary alternative provision budget. These came to a total of £36,233.67.

- 5.3.7 The main interventions that were funded included funding for a 1:1 TA, to support the pupil either partial such as mornings only, or across the full school day. This might be to support a pupil in class, or to allow delivery of individualised interventions outside of the classroom. All referrals provided with this support were in the primary phase.
- 5.3.8 The main source of specialist resources with a financial implication included access to specialist teachers from Manor Green School to evaluate practice through observation and feedback to staff. A highly experienced behaviour analyst was also commissioned who provided individualised support to staff and families. This included conducting functional behaviour assessments, modelling and support work in schools and work in home with families and carers to ensure a consistent and supportive approach across settings.
- 5.3.9 At the end of the intervention period and before the following scheduled Intervention Hub meeting, schools are requested to provide an update on the outcomes observed.



From the outcome summaries received, the majority of the schools reported a reduction in the risk of exclusion for the child or young person referred. As the graph illustrates, risk of fixed term exclusions have reduced across the majority of the referrals.

The majority of the initial outcomes received were shared during the Spring Term. Any follow up observation has not mainly been possible due to the Covid – 19 pandemic.

5.4 Recommendations

- 5.4.1 Most local authorities have systems which indicate the range of top-up funding which might be provided for children and young people with a particular complexity of need (sometimes referred to as ‘banded’ funding systems). This can be helpful in providing clear and transparent funding arrangements for many types of need that may be met in a range of different institutions.

- 5.4.2 A key outcome from the Intervention Hub was that a greater emphasis needs to be placed on early, appropriate, intervention for children and young people, with the goal of enabling more young people to live and thrive in their local environment as well as to prepare them for adulthood. The benefit of such an approach has been noted in the illustrations above through a reduction in the risk of exclusions. This provides evidence that we believe we can meet more of these needs within our own local schools by providing locally based, mainstream intervention.
- 5.4.3 There will remain a cohort for whom specialist provision remains appropriate. However, the aim remains to reduce the need for Education, Health and Care Plans and thereby reduce pressure on our local specialist provision.
- 5.4.4 We will be consulting with schools and local partners on the establishment of a formal Intervention fund that is intended to support schools to develop the capacity to be more inclusive by identifying, developing and sharing good practice. We know that for some children and young people the request for a statutory assessment has been sparked by the perception that resources can only be accessed once an EHCP has been requested or awarded. The Intervention Fund will be a mechanism by which settings can more rapidly access resources, training, and specialist support such as therapy to support children and young people who do not have an EHCP. This effective early intervention is expected to improve the speed of response as well as to lower the incidence of an ECHP being necessary to meet needs.

ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Finance

The financial implications arising from the report are set out in the supporting information, including confirmation that the costs associated with the pilot are being funded in the short term from one-off Reserve funding. Creation of a formal Intervention Fund, as identified in the paper, will need to identify a source of funding.

Borough Solicitor

The LA has the legal powers to do what is proposed in this report. This procedure may cut both the instances of EHCP plans and reduce the cost of provision overall. Many schools and parents request EHCP assessments because they see it as the only way to get additional special educational provision that they think the child or young person requires. This is a very good initiative, it may also reduce complaints that in SEN are often quite protracted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contacts for further information

Kashif Nawaz
Head of Children's Support Service, 01344 35 3318
Kashif.nawaz@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Rachel Morgan
Assistant Director, Education and Learning,
Rachel.morgan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk,