

Early Help Task & Finish Group – Terms of Reference

Aim

The Group will undertake a review of the current application of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to support the provision of Early Help services. At present some £592k is provided for targeted Early Help services through the 'Contribution to Combined Budgets' part of the centrally retained DSG, while School Forum approved the release of a further £600k from the High Needs Block in 2016-17 to support this area of work.

The Group will consider how the existing funding of £592k has and is being applied, and how newly released funding will be applied to existing contracts and services in 2016-17. This will provide the basis for determining how the funding will be applied from 2017-18 onwards, with an emphasis on identifying the opportunities for co-designing and co-commissioning Early Help services, with a view to securing the best possible outcomes for young people, families and schools accessing this support.

The work of the Group will be set in the context of the current and future development and implementation of national education policy, the changes in schools' funding arrangements as we move towards the implementation of a National Fair Funding Formula, and the continued pressure on public expenditure, in particular in relation to local authority funding, insofar as it impacts on services to support vulnerable children and young people.

Group Membership

- Representatives drawn from the membership of Schools Forum, covering primary, secondary and special phases, maintained schools and academies, headteachers and governors
- Other non-Forum representatives from schools and specialist providers
- Local Authority representatives from Children's Services, including children's social care and finance
- Specialist inputs as and when required.

Working Methods/Objectives

- To undertake a review of the current allocation of funding to support targeted Early Help through the 'Contribution to Combined Budgets' part of the centrally controlled DSG, analysing each area of spend, the specific contracts/services/projects being delivered, the ranges of children and young people being supported, and the measurable outcomes.
- To determine how the funding released from the High Need Block in 2016-17 will be applied to existing Early Help contracts and services, in conjunction with the existing historic funding allocated through centrally controlled DSG.
- To develop a partnership approach for 2017-18 onwards - involving schools, the local authority and other sector providers - in co-designing and co-commissioning of targeted Early Help services, ensuring that the available resources are applied in the most co-ordinated, efficient and effective way to deliver the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in Shropshire.
- To establish the arrangements for monitoring and reporting to Schools Forum the spending from central DSG to support targeted Early Help.

- To monitor, to take into account and to be informed by, the development/implementation of national education policy through the school funding reforms and the funding for local authority services to support Children’s Services.
- To circulate papers in advance of the Task & Finish Group meetings.
- To cross-reference the work of this Group with the work of the separate High Needs Task & Finish Group.
- To provide regular progress reports to Schools Forum and to produce a final report by the end of the Autumn term 2016.
- To consult and share information with the wider community of schools including headteachers, governors, partners and stakeholders.

Project Timetable

Activity	When	Who
Approve draft Terms of Reference for Early Help Task & Finish Group as well as membership, timetable and communication with stakeholders.	9 June 2016	Schools Forum
First meeting of the T&FG	14 June 2016	T&FG
Second meeting of T&FG	July 2016	T&FG
Progress report to Schools Forum	15 September 2016	Officers
Further meetings of T&FG	First and second half-terms in Autumn	T&FG
Progress report to Schools Forum	20 October 2016	Officers
Final report to Schools Forum	24 November 2016	Officers