

# VULNERABLE LEARNERS SUB GROUP MINUTES (ITEM 7B)

26<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Microsoft Teams

<b>CHAIR</b>	Julia Jones – Headteacher - Barons Court
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	Brin Martin, Amanda Champ, Jackie Mullan, Tom Dowler, Sue Watson, Sarah Greaves, Gary Bloom, Lisa Clark, Julie Hollingsworth, Lesley Yelland, Cathy Braun, Taz Sayed, Steve Cornwall.
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Wendy Hackett, Mark Jordan.
<b>INVITED (DID NOT ATTEND)</b>	

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS/ MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
<p>Welcome to all. The minutes from the previous meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 were agreed as a true representation of the meeting.</p>	
<b>ACTION ITEMS AND UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Electronic Devices for Vulnerable Learners</b> – AC updated the VLSG members. The DfE had received requests from Southend however were unable to approve. Information has been received by Headteachers and enquires are requests for devices can be made by individual schools directly to the DfE.</li> <li>• <b>Health Guidance and Referrals</b> – JH advised the group that the issue is complex. The current advice provided to schools is to refer support through the school nursing team and use Social Workers and Family support to refer to social prescribers. Discussion took place regarding barriers to referrals being requested and support programmes in response to referrals being made. Dialogue focused on the awareness of the routes the schools are able to access and it was agreed that direct representation from health with question and answers at the next meeting would be requested to ensure that full access is available for vulnerable learners.</li> <li>• <b>Representation of Social Care at VLSG meetings</b> – BM had implemented discussions with JoL and representation from social care attended the VLSG meeting.</li> <li>• <b>School Visits</b> – BM advised direct communication to schools has been published and further guidance from government is to be published in the near future. BM will amend communication if necessary</li> <li>• <b>Roadworks</b> – AC advised the transport group has now disbanded and all issues have been addressed.</li> </ul>	
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct representation from social prescribers at the next VLSG meeting to respond to questions raised at the meeting.</li> <li>• JH to provide the VLSG further updates on health guidance and referrals.</li> <li>• School Visit communication to schools – BM will re-send if guidance updated.</li> <li>• Representation from the Parent/Carer forum to be requested on the VLSG.</li> </ul>	<p>JH JH BM GB</p>

## ACCESS AND INCLUSION – COVID VULNERABLE LEARNERS UPDATE

### DISCUSSION

#### Attendance

Discussions regarding attendance data for Mary-July 2020 and September-November 2020 were implemented at the meeting and it was agreed that TD will present patterns on attendance at the next meeting as the Schools Census is being received shortly. TD advised sets of reports will be available to the group with wider information available on individual patterns. Irregularities reported through the data are largely due to technology issues which are being resolved. Officers are tracking attendance of Vulnerable Learners and considerations are being implemented. Schools are currently compiling DfE attendance return information. It was highlighted at the meeting that not all schools are fully sharing data. GB advised the group that any SEN and EHCP students which are not presenting at school are followed up with family members and the school regarding rationale for non-attendance. SG advised that Welfare Call are monitoring and tracking LAC children – LAC attendance has improved across the Autumn Term and that she is working with the data team to compare LAC and other vulnerable children at a local and national level. TD shared the B2B data dashboard which presented some variations – TD to reconcile manually to see where the differences are and will present at the next meeting.

#### Reduced Timetables

CB circulated a report prior to the meeting for the members to read and comment upon within the meeting. Currently there are 18 students on reduced timetables, however the VLSG group members expressed concerns regarding the return from schools within the Autumn Term as only 48%, and therefore the group noted the difficulty of interpreting such data for vulnerable learners. CB advised the group that a request for further information from school is being sent out. CB noted that small proportion of students are on the reduced time table for longer period of time – cases are being looked at individually and schools are working with LA to monitor the length of times pupils are receiving a reduced timetable. Information this term is limited due to partial return from schools. BM noted school information sharing is still a concern. It was agreed that the chair of the VLSG would raise this issue at the Education Board in December on behalf of the VLSG.

#### Early Years

LY advised Early Years are working with the admissions team and have received information regarding vulnerable learners ready to start school in the academic year 2021-2022. Social workers have been notified where they need to apply for school places by the 15<sup>th</sup> January. LY will continue to work in partnership with the admissions team monitoring the progress and ensuring that applications for schools are implemented.

#### EHE

CB circulated a report prior to the meeting. 12 new referrals for EHE had been made for this term. There are currently 24 children who are back on roll within schools, following initial EHE. CB advised the group that the 10 day protocol is beginning to impact and she will request amendments to legislation according to feedback which is received.

#### Hardship Fund

BM reported on discussion at SPSG – It was agreed that the chair of the SPSG will send recommendations from the discussions held within this group. It was reinforced that the priority for the Council is to support vulnerable learners. The Hardship Fund has been received, this is not replacing pupil premium but reaching broader groups of vulnerable learners. The allocation is being currently reviewed – not means tested and it was agreed that schools would support this information being received at the earliest opportunity. The views from the VLSG welcome how we can reach families that need help and support – BM is of view that individual schools know their pupils and families best and are best placed to distribute and therefore systems are being devised to ensure this can be implemented in a timely manner. It was agreed that BM will share details as soon as the policy is finalised and within the public domain. AC advised the group that meetings with community engagements are taking place looking at ways on how help can be provided and identify needs, this is extending beyond financial help and also focused on providing mental health support.

## **SEND**

JH updated the VLSG on transitional arrangements/open days that schools have put in place with a particular focus on supporting EHCP and SEND parents inform their decision making regarding secondary school admissions. Secondary schools have been requested to provide information regarding open days and admission tours. There has been a 58% response rate received. 25% of those schools responding have indicated that they have offered face to face transitioning opportunities for parents and pupils in accordance with COVID guidelines. 33% of schools responding have indicated that they are not providing admission arrangements either face to face or virtual due to COVID 19. 5 schools have not responded with information requested. It was agreed at the meeting that JH will follow up transitional arrangements with all schools awaiting response. Discussion took place at the meeting on how parents are supported through this process and GB advised the group that the SEND team is following up with parents and monitoring transition arrangements for EHCP pupils. Concerns were expressed by the group that parents need to go through the SENCO to find out what the offer is if it is not available on the school website or widely known. It was outlined that the SEND team are working on longer transitional plans for pupils with EHCPs.

## **LAC**

SG will share final reports which have been signed of at the Corporate Parenting Group with all for discussion at the next meeting.

## **Exclusion Rates**

Following discussions at the previous VLSG regarding exclusion rates at specialist provision CB provided a summary to the group. CB advised schools are now improving and percentage of exclusions is now very low across the Autumn Term. However, it was noted that fixed term rates for pupils with SEN support and vulnerable are still high. CB highlighted that is a very small number of pupils and therefore any exclusion will show as high impact statistically.

## **Inclusion Panel and Fair Access Protocol**

CB provided the group with an update regarding the Inclusion Panel with referrals increasing. This year a total of 11 referrals have been heard. The pilot is going well and impact will be evaluated in the near future. CB advised the group that following the changes to the protocol schools are not able to off-roll and pupils stay dual registered. The impact is showing in a lower trend of permanent exclusions than last year.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TD will present patterns on attendance at the next meeting as the Schools Census is being received shortly.</li></ul>	TD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TD will email data comparison on attendance during closures and opening of schools</li></ul>	TD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• JJ to take school information sharing to Education Board</li></ul>	JJ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BM to request recommendations from the SPSG are shared with the VLSG.</li></ul>	BM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BM to share information regarding the Hardship Fund allocation to the VLSG and schools.</li></ul>	BM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• JH to share with the group further information regarding secondary school transition for EHCP pupils.</li></ul>	JH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SG to send LAC report to VLSG for discussion at the next meeting.</li></ul>	SG
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WH to present to the group Post 16 provision and number of NEETs</li></ul>	WH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CB/MJ to provide an update on attendance for vulnerable learners following the meeting on 01.10.20.</li></ul>	CB/MJ

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

