

# Southend-on-Sea City Council

Executive Director of Children and Public Health  
to  
**Education Board**  
On  
**13<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Report prepared by:

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and  
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**Agenda  
Item No.**

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## Review of Inclusion across Southend-on-Sea Schools, Settings, and Services

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### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **To update the board on the work of the Southend Education Inclusion Task and Finish Advisory Group and emerging themes for the recommended spend of the annual £1M High Needs budget from 2022/23.**

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree the proposed allocation of spend of the annual £1M High Needs budget from 2022/23.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 As identified in the report to the Education Board on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Task and Finish Group has continued to concentrate its focus on the following themes

3.1.1 The effectiveness of the SEND graduated response in relation to early identification and intervention.

3.1.2 How schools, pupils and their families can be better supported by the LA and other external services to enable children and young people with SEND to be educated successfully alongside peers in a mainstream school.

3.1.3 To explore practise, service provision and modelling, and training to meet the growing social, emotional, mental health, anxiety and related medical needs of children and young people in Southend.

3.1.4 Current alternative provision options available locally and potential gaps or needs.

- 3.2 In addition, a number of aligned surveys went out to the following groups:

3.2.1 All maintained, special and alternative provision schools. The response rate was 96%, which equates to 50 out of 52 schools (with one Infant and Junior School providing a joint application). Full findings in appendix 1

- 3.2.2 Parents and Carers via Southend SEND Independent Forum (SSIF). 91 Parents and Carers with children with SEND completed the survey. Full findings in appendix 2
- 3.2.3 Statutory Children's Services, local authority education services and health partners. (Themes and findings included in school report appendix 1)
- 3.2.4 Governor responses equated to 11. (Themes and findings included in school report appendix 1)
- 3.3 There was apparent consistency of themes across all survey responses, all of which aligned to the original themes in 3.1 but provided greater clarity on where practitioners and parents felt the specific focus and highest areas of need should be directed.
- 3.4 From these findings the group were then able to allocate funding allocations through percentage of need to the designated themes.

## **4 Funding allocations**

### **4.1 The effectiveness of the SEND graduated response in relation to early identification and intervention. (20% / £200,000)**

- 4.1.1 Schools, services, and parents identified that there is a need for consistent assessment processes and tools to ensure that all schools in the local area are aligned and following the Southend SEND expectations. Specifically, for those with emerging needs and SEND support. Resource a suite of tools for assessment that supports profiling needs, with flexible strategies and interventions.
- 4.1.2 Commissioning an inclusion expert to upskill existing staff and work with all Southend settings, that has a flexible approach to identify strengths and challenges of our provisions against Southend on Sea's inclusion expectations. Thus, embedding excellent inclusive practice across all schools which evidence consistency of an effective graduated response that demonstrates nurturing practice.
- 4.1.3 As part of this work, co-produce an inclusion plan/charter with Southend settings for all provisions to commit to an agreed suite of inclusion expectations. The emphasis must be on collaboration between all settings and services to attend and engage in any area wide training offers which in turn influences the implementation and development of inclusive policies and practice.
- 4.1.4 Commission effective practical resources for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) that are flexible in meeting the diverse needs of children both within school and at home that are in addition to the current offer.

### **4.2 How schools, pupils and their families can be better supported by the LA and other external services to enable children and young people with SEND to be educated successfully alongside peers in a mainstream school. (20% / £200,000)**

- 4.2.1 Commissioning a high-quality training provider that leads on relational practice and trauma informed approaches. It was identified that the provider needs to

focus their work on raising a consistent knowledge base, understanding and early identification of the cause; managing and deescalating presenting behaviours; and bespoke training offer for individual school needs, building on the schools strengths and areas for development.

- 4.2.2 Developing a network of trained school-based inclusion champions who can provide outreach and share best practice to other schools and settings in the area.
- 4.2.3 Replicating the above inclusion champions within Southend services to schools and families all working towards the same monitoring and delivery framework, providing consistency of a shared understanding and practice.
- 4.2.4 Enhancing the capacity, knowledge base and expertise of the inclusion outreach service to increase the outreach to schools and enable effective modelling and best practice.
- 4.3 **Responding and meeting the growing social, emotional, mental health, anxiety and related medical needs of children and young people in Southend. (50% / £500,000)**
  - 4.3.1 Specific training that is bespoke to a school's needs and delivered on site, whilst also reinforcing consistent approaches and models across the city. Training needs to both upskill and train all school staff whilst providing focused training to key staff such as Senior Leadership Teams including SENCOs. To continue to champion and provide the ongoing development of school staff and school inclusion polices.
  - 4.3.2 Areas identified for specific training by both schools and parents/carers were: Neurodevelopment and neurodiversity; managing violent and challenging behaviours with effective positive handling and de-escalation techniques; children with sensory needs; and relational practise (including trauma informed, attachment awareness and adverse childhood experiences).
  - 4.3.3 Although training for parents covered a similar range as above, this needs to focus on co-produced delivery for advice, resources and facilitated parent support groups.
  - 4.3.4 Reviewing the commissioning of and access to counselling services in Southend, including family counselling.
  - 4.3.5 Exploring the current triage and single point of referral for accessing all services including universal. Increasing awareness, improving communication, and ensuring buy-in by all partners to align to a single front door for accessing support for children with additional SEMH needs.
- 4.4 **Additional resource budget for school SEND resources and hubs (10% / £100,000)**
  - 4.4.1 An ability for schools to bid for additional funds to provide innovative interventions in meeting children's additional needs as part of their effective inclusive offer. This requires a quality assurance framework to evidence

permanence measures around use of funds and outcomes for children, as well as ongoing monitoring arrangements to ensure practice and/or provision is embedded and makes a difference.

#### **4.5 Alternative Provision (AP) Pilot**

4.5.1 All schools were given the opportunity to express an interest in operating an alternative provision base either within their setting or elsewhere. From this the LA received five expressions of interest, 2 from Academy Trusts, 2 from Alternative Provisions and 1 mainstream LA maintained school.

4.6 To ensure no conflicts of interest, a separate partnership subgroup was formed based upon the survey contributors and those that evidenced models of effective inclusive practice and a clear desire to see enhanced provision within the area but who did not have any conflicts or allegiances from those expressing an interest.

4.7 The group consists of 1 LA maintained primary, 1 academy primary, 1 secondary, 1 governor, parent carer representation and supporting LA officers. The group will meet on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 for an initial planning meeting and to set the scoping arrangements based upon the survey feedback from all partners. This will then be shared with the interested parties to progress to forming business cases and interviews in the new year. To view the findings from schools, parents, and partners in relation to additional alternative provision, please refer to appendices 1 and 2.

4.8 Schools identified the need for provisions to support all primary and secondary key stages. For dual registration, either placed in a base in a mainstream school or in a new off-site provision. 3 main areas of focus were identified: low level SEMH needs such as children experiencing anxiety, higher level SEMH needs such as those children open to education access team and an assessment unit for SEN Support.

### **5 Summary**

5.1 Although the group has established the proportion of spend to each of the identified areas. The work now needs to move to identifying the appropriate specialist providers with the right expertise and carry out procurement exercises to commission and secure the identified initial resources required. The research for these areas has already been started by the project lead and will be shared with the group in advance of the next meeting to ensure that procurement can commence as soon into the new year as possible.

5.2 Once the services and resources have been costed, a financial plan will need to be devised to map out actual spend and delivery timeline. In addition, performance indicators and monitoring arrangements will be discussed and agreed in more detail at the next meeting. However, it was agreed that a specific focus on pupil access to education was key, with key performance indicators covering pupil attendance, avoiding suspension and access to full time education.