

CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM – SEN, SOCIAL DEPRIVATION, ACCESS AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group held on Wednesday, 10 January 2007 at Newton Rigg, Penrith.

Present: Steven Bowditch (Special Schools), Chris Brooksbank (South Lakeland Primary and Chair of Group), Janet Mansfield (Community Secondary) Anton Hodge (LA), Ashleigh Sutton (LA), and Nicola Shiels (LA).

Apologies: Mrs E Barraclough, Mrs S Fearn, Mr K Little, Mr A Rutter,

Attendance at the meeting was very low. The Chair indicated that Forum members may not realise which group they were members of. The level of attendance would be highlighted at the next full meeting of the Forum.

1. Notes of the Meeting held on 27 March 2006

The notes of the meeting of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Working Group held on 27 March 2006 were agreed as an accurate record. These notes had also been noted by the full Schools' Forum.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Minutes of PHA A+I and CASH A+I Meetings

- i) PHA/Access and Inclusion Development Group – The minutes of the PHA/A+I Development Group held on 28 November 2006 were noted.
- ii) CASH/A+I Development Group - The minutes of the PHA/A+I Development Group held on 30 November 2006 were noted.

The Schools' Forum SEN Group thanked CASH, PHA and A+I for sharing the minutes of their meetings.

When it had been agreed that the Schools' Forum group and the CASH and PHA A+I groups would exchange minutes/notes of their meetings, Stuart Goodall had agreed to act as a common link between the groups by attending each of the groups. Stuart had recently left the LA so the SEN group sought some clarification as to which officer might now act as a common link.

The group also requested a summary of the new Children's Services structure including details about the areas of business that each of the Heads of Service were now responsible for.

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4. Review of Funding for Social Deprivation and Personalised Learning

The School Budgets Working Group had met earlier in the day and had begun to look at issues relating to the review of the formula.

There had been a presentation that outlined the issues and the group had been asked to make suggestions about how the formula could be reviewed. There had been a useful discussion. The group had felt that the formula should not be too complicated in terms of AWPU and that there should not be too many factors but the factors that were included should be meaningful.

However, this was a big task and there may be specific areas that could be looked at separately eg. SEN, school meals.

There was a similar presentation to the SEN Group that aimed to identify a way forward for dealing with the funding of social deprivation and personalisation which could feed into the main formula review.

In Cumbria SEN funding was pupil led, no other LAs funded SEN in the same way, should Cumbria continue with pupil led funding or consider moving to place led funding of SEN?

Social Deprivation Funding – was this element funded at an appropriate level and was it allocated using the most appropriate method?

Also to consider was the funding for personalised learning.

Social Deprivation and personalisation were becoming very closely linked, there was more emphasis in these areas and funding was increasing. LAs were required to submit a statement to the DfES that outlined the level of spending on social deprivation.

There must be a social deprivation factor but at what level, and what was the most appropriate method of allocation?

In Cumbria, and in a number of other areas the main indicator used to allocate social deprivation funding was free school meals. The advantages were that the information was accessible and was income based so it was a reasonable indicator. However, the disadvantage was that many eligible for FSM did not register and the levels were based only on those that did register.

Other indicators included:-

- Area Based – low income benefits, average income measures, index of multiple deprivation (used in Cumbria but only for nursery)
- Commercial Products
- National curriculum tests/other test data eg CAT
- Foundation stage profile
- Pupil mobility factor
- Looked after children/vulnerable
- EAL/Ethnic minority

The SEN Group needed to consider how to fund SEN, social deprivation and personalisation in the new formula and how to take this forward.

The Special Schools representative was concerned that special schools faced the same demands as primary and secondary schools but were not included when it came to the allocation of additional funds. He pointed out that the same legislation and DfES guidance

that was applied to primary and secondary schools also applied to special schools and that the five special schools would receive the same level as KS4 for personalisation.

There was also a view that there should be a fairer method of funding SEN schools and strategic facilities.

Over the next 9 to 10 months the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and Inclusion Group would consider how to organise and distribute funding for SEN, deprivation and personalisation.

The group would begin by looking at the current position, who was responsible for the budget, how much funding was available and how was it distributed. They would then be able to look at possible ways to improve the way the funding was allocated.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to this process to invite the heads of the five special schools to contribute to the debate by attending some of the future meetings. Two meetings were already scheduled:-

6 February 2007 – the group would look at social deprivation funding and personalisation – how other LAs were dealing, look at different models.

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6 March 2007 – the group would consider SEN funding. The heads of the five special schools would be invited to attend this meeting. Strategic facilities should also be represented – Ann Henderson would be asked to secure an appropriate representative to attend the meeting.

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Both meetings would begin at 1.00pm rather than 1.30pm as had been previously arranged.

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5. SEN Funding – Proposals regarding Budget Savings for 2007-08

The group noted a report that summarised the proposed budget savings in 2007-08 from the Schools Budget, which would impact on SEN, social deprivation and A+I.

In discussing the report, the Special Schools representative raised some questions and concerns – in particular relating to SEN statements and which bandings would be included. It was noted that the MFG would apply to all schools including the five special schools. Statements below band 9 would increase by 2.5% but bands 9, 12 and 15 would increase in line with other increases and this would be closer to 5%.

6. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SEN, Social Deprivation, Access and

Inclusion Working Group would be on Tuesday, 6 February 2007. The meeting would be held at Newton Rigg, Penrith and would begin at 1.00pm, as agreed during the meeting.

P&R/NJS
22 January 2007