

**CUMBERLAND COUNCIL SCHOOLS FORUM**

**Report Title: Delivering Better Value in SEND Briefing - An overview of the DBV programme with relevant updates**

**Meeting date: 2 November 2023**

**Report of: Dan Barton, Assistant Director – SEND, Education & Inclusion**

## **1.0 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme was commissioned to identify the changes a Local Authority can make to support children and young people with SEND.
- 1.2 The initial two workstreams have been further developed and split into a project plan of six workstreams – a copy of our ‘Plan on a Page’ is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Our initial priorities are:
- Develop a Teaching Assistant Academy to drive recruitment and retention
  - Develop and Implement revised SEND Involvement Process
  - Increase the number of Schools offering Resourced Provision places.
- 1.4 Progress has been made against each of these along with many other workstream elements and at a recent monitoring meeting the DfE confirmed they were happy with our plans and progress to date.

## **2.0 Link to Council Plan Priorities**

- 2.1 Ensuring that schools are funded appropriately is supportive of the Council Plan “to improve the health and wellbeing of its residents” and the priority to “address inequalities and enable its residents to access opportunities that will empower them to achieve their goals.”

## **3.0 Progress**

- 3.1 **Workstream 1 - Training and Development** – In the last 12 months the Autism Specialist Advisory Teaching team has achieved fantastic success with the roll-out of the Autism Education Trust Training Programme. 106 sessions have been delivered across Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness, with 3033 attendees in the Cumberland area alone. Across all

metrics of delegate feedback, the team averaged 4.6 out of 5, showing both the strength of content and the high level and impact of their delivery. In addition, the SEND Conference dates have been confirmed as 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024. This now has a more detailed plan in place, including speakers, venue, catering, workshop holders and exhibitors. The Eventbrite booking link will shortly be going live.

- 3.2 **Workstream 2 – Data Analysis** – Mastodon have been contracted to undertake analysis of our data to identify areas of need and future demand for potential Resource Provision places. We have also had demonstrations of potential Quality Assurance software and procurement arrangements are currently being discussed.
- 3.3 **Workstream 3 – Prevention and Early Intervention** – Support has been gained from across the system for removing the SEND Referral Process from the Social Care Early Help System. This is being revised to be more streamlined and focussed on educational needs, with the ability to make sideways referrals into Early Help and Health where required. The aim is to reduce the burden for referral and allow quicker access to early intervention programmes. It also aims to provide more relevant information for our staff to enable improved threshold decision making. A workshop with stakeholders was held on 18<sup>th</sup> October with the aim of a pilot of the revised form early in January 2024.
- 3.4 **Workstream 4 – Stakeholder and Partnership Work** – We have approached SENDAC (Parent Carer Forum) to deliver a coproduction workshop at the SEND Conference, they are discussing this with their forum, and we hope to have an update soon. We are also working with SENDAC and Health colleagues to update the Local Offer to increase its ease of use, ensure it contains the right information and to reduce jargonistic language. A Working Group are meeting regularly to move this forward including the aforementioned partners. In an effort to reduce the dense language on the Local Offer a separate professional’s hub has been established. This is the home for all professionally focused documentation, policies, guidance, training, and templates. This is now live and initial feedback is positive.
- 3.5 **Workstream 5 – Infrastructure/Provision Strategy** – The Cumberland Inclusion Strategy is fully developed and awaiting sign off from the Council Executive. Links and crossovers with other Council Plans and the SEND Partnership continuous improvement plans have been mapped.
- 3.6 **Workstream 6 – Capacity Building** – Resourced Provision Expressions of Interest have been requested from Schools and a needs analysis completed. Schools have until 10<sup>th</sup> of November to make their submissions and will be informed of the outcomes by the end of the month. Initial conversations for the Teaching Assistant Academy have been held with support from across the system. As this will drive recruitment and retention the first step we are taking is to ask our current Teaching Assistants for their views via a survey. Communications will shortly be going out to schools to update them and to let them know how they can help, with the survey being issued during the next half term.

## 4.0 Financial & Other Relevant Implications

- 4.1 DBV funding is £1 million phased over the next two years, regular planning and monitoring meetings are in place with Finance colleagues.

25 October 2023

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Appendices:



Plan on a Page.pdf

## **REPORT AUTHOR**

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