

**Schools Forum**  
**04 July 2019**

**Early Help Dedicated Schools Grant Update**

**1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 School Forum to note the financial position, recognising that although all allocated money has not been spent it is committed utilising payment by results and as such as been carried over to Year 2.
- 1.2 School Forum notes that due to the procurement regulations in place for contracts of this value we require a 12 month lead in to have a service in place.
- 1.3 School Forum agrees in principle now to continue to work jointly with Staffordshire County Council on a district footprint delivering family support covering all phases. This decision will enable us to procure this service working with schools to develop and mobilise.

**PART A**

**2. What decision is required**

2.1 Schools forum are required to make an annual decision on the use of the DSG funding. This decision was due to be in October however from a commissioning perspective this creates tight timelines to work with providers and is particularly the case as a procurement of this size will take a minimum of 12 months. Therefore an early decision will help in any planning for the coming year.

2.2 We seek approval from Schools Forum to continue to jointly commission Family Support and as such we would want schools' involvement in co-designing the service we develop which will then go to tender.

**3. Reasons for recommendation**

3.1 The new arrangements came into place in April 2018. We are receiving an increasing number of referrals from schools with 707 referrals received in 2018/19. Often the needs of these families are complex and therefore the time taken to achieve referrals can be longer but again these are starting to be achieved at increasing pace.

3.2 There has been positive engagement with the family support providers and the SEND prototype work, the DIP's and other local arrangements to ensure that the Family Support Providers are available within schools exiting arrangements to meet the needs of families.

3.3 The Family Support contract was in place prior to schools buying into this support. Procuring a new service jointly will allow schools a greater involvement in shaping the design of the service they require.

3.4 It has been agreed that we will regularly update Schools Forum in relation to Early Help delivered on behalf of schools across the county. As such the report will: provide a brief overview of the service that has been commissioned, provide an overview of the performance to date and request commitment to continue with the existing arrangements allowing districts/ boroughs to be involved in co-designing the service going forward.

**PART B**

**4. Background**

4.1 In July 2018 Schools Forum agreed to work with Staffordshire County Council to locally broker Early Help support for families on a district/borough footprint using the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). As a result, work was undertaken to bring schools together to agree how to utilize this

resource. All districts chose to invest in Family Support which was commissioned by Staffordshire County Council.

4.2 It is worth noting that this service had already been procured therefore there were limited changes that could be made at this time.

4.3 Family Support is provided by a range of voluntary sector providers who have teams of family support workers who deliver this service. Often these organisations are locally based and as a result maximise the use of external funds and the community support available to families.

## 5. What is Family Support?

5.1 The family support service is a service that operates on a key worker model where we integrate support around the families, having one person focusing on the family (one key worker), ensuring that their needs are treated within the context of the whole family. Therefore each individual will have their own needs dealt with, within their family context (one family) and ensure that services working with the family understand and deliver appropriate support to the family (one plan).

5.2 Tier two means the family are dealing with additional needs that are unable to be resolved without support. We do not prescribe what this looks like as the needs of families are varied, but families are likely to be trying new solutions and willing to change but need help to find the right solutions to improve their families' lives.

5.3 The service is in place and we have worked hard to instill similar processes using the new Early Help Assessment so that should a family's needs increase and the case is required to be stepped up to Local Support Teams (LST) or Safeguarding Units (SSU), the processes remain the same so the family's experience is improved.

5.4 The services are currently provided by a range of voluntary sector providers detailed below;

East Staffordshire	Harvey Girls
Tamworth	Malachi Specialist Family Support Service CIC
Stafford, South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Cannock	Sickle Cell & Thalassemia Support Project
Staffordshire Moorlands	HomeStart Staffordshire Moorlands
Newcastle under Lyme	HomeStart Newcastle Borough
Stafford	YMCA North Staffordshire

## 6. How are we engaging with schools?

6.1 We have worked with schools over the last 18 months. We have ensured that there has been:

6.1.1 Regular communication in the school bag – taking the learning along the way we have agreed that all items will be listed at Family Support and agreed a search function to enable people to find the associated articles that detail updates.

6.1.2 Attendance at local boards including secondary headteacher meetings, primary headteacher meeting, DIP meetings, SEND hubs (South Staffordshire) and with individual groups in East Staffordshire and Newcastle that were set up to monitor the effectiveness of this work.

6.2 We have listened to feedback from these meetings and adapted our ways of working to; align with the governance so for example the family support provider attends the SEND Hub meetings to ensure effective collaborative working, we have developed an interactive PDF to support DSL's with threshold decisions and we have continued to refine the monitoring reports so that we are sharing the right level of performance information.

6.3 We continue to seek feedback and if there are any queries or improvements Schools Forum would suggest please contact [tracey.barnacle@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.barnacle@staffordshire.gov.uk)

## 7. Performance to date (2018/19)

7.1 As the contract is jointly funded by schools and the local authority, we have included performance information that relates to the whole contract as well as school specific information. Within the first year we received a total of 1569 referrals out of a possible 1975.

7.2 The majority of these referrals were paid for using Building Resilient Families and Communities (BRFC) funding, this means that schools have more buying power as all families are screened for this criteria and if they meet it we utilize this funding first.

7.3 The Early Help resource from schools brought enough capacity to work with 976 families over the year. We received 707 referrals from schools.

7.4 Schools are the largest referring organization for this support, however we have not excluded other agencies from referring but it is a requirement that schools are aware of and involved in support if a referral is made by other organizations.

7.5 A picture of the existing performance is included in Appendix 1, however the key highlights are:

- Overall 79% of referral target was achieved
- Of these referrals received 63% engaged with the service, this means that they worked with the provider to complete the Early Help Assessment and start to take the required actions to affect changes. The remaining are likely to still do this but had not reached this milestone at the end of year one.
- Of those who were engaged from a schools perspective 39% went onto achieve successful outcomes. This means the needs of families were met. It is important to note here that the majority of referrals were received in quarter 3 and therefore we would not anticipate this number being much higher due to the complex needs of the families that they are working with.

7.6 Some of the underlying reasons behind this performance are :

7.6.1 Schools have been effective in identifying families who are able to benefit from this service and achieve improvements as schools have had the most families meeting the outcomes payment.

7.6.2 There were delays in some districts in mobilizing the services. For example, in Staffordshire Moorlands the provider was not aware of the additional work until mid-April. As Homestart Staffordshire Moorlands worked with Vyson through a sub-contracting arrangement this took time to agree and subsequently recruit staff.

7.6.3 The contract utilizes a payment by results model. Whilst we recognize that using this kind of method is valuable in terms of ensuring outcomes achieve. There is a balance to be struck, as utilizing this model of payment has resulted in the providers being unable to recruit additional staff to meet the demands being placed upon us as they cannot afford to pay staff in the absence of outcomes payments.

7.6.4 In the districts that have worked the best, South Staffordshire and Tamworth, they had been delivering this type of work for over a year prior to this arrangement and therefore we feel that the time to embed the way of working is invaluable and we are already seeing at the end of Q1 for Year 2 that these targets are being met so this should continue to improve.

## 8. Budget

8.1 We have committed spend to the value of the contract, but the realisation of these payments will not be until Year 2 as this is a payment by results model and therefore we have carried forward any underspend from 2018/19 into Year 2.

8.2 As this is a payment by results contract, we only pay providers where cases have been successful in engaging with the service and where cases have closed with successful outcomes being met. This has meant DSG budgets have not been fully utilized in Year 1. Any unused allocation has been carried forward to year 2.

District	Budget for 2018-19	Paid for successful engagement and closures	Budget carried forward to 2019-20
Cannock	£180,000	£79,500	£100,500

Lichfield	£136,500	£28,600	£107,900
Stafford	£166,250	£47,250	£119,000
South Staffs	£143,920	£75,558	£68,362
Newcastle	£226,296	£46,337	£179,959
Staffordshire Moorlands	£153,900	£46,170	£107,730
East Staffordshire	£220,000	£77,000	£143,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,226,866</b>	<b>£400,415</b>	<b>£826,451</b>

## 9. Next Steps

9.1 When we procured this service, it was done so before we knew that schools would be jointly commissioning. As a result, the financial threshold was set lower than we would now need for a joint arrangement.

9.2 It is also acknowledged that the service was not built with schools' needs in mind. As a result, we intend to go out to tender on this service in 2019 to have new arrangements in place for 2020.

9.3 As such if Schools forum agrees to continue to jointly fund, we will be looking to engage schools in the redesign of the service and would welcome ongoing dialogue with schools to enable this to happen.

9.4 We will continue to refine the systems and processes to work with schools and as such will continue to update Schools Forum on the performance for Year 2.

Countywide	Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total/Avg Achieved	% of target achieved to date
TOTAL Families referred for Family Support Service	1975	446	436	429	258	1569	79.4%
Families referred for Family Support Service (0-4)	463	172	101	49	47	369	79.7%
Families referred for Family Support Service (DSG)	976	146	113	220	90	568	58.2%
Families referred for Family Support Service (BRFC)	536	129	222	160	121	632	117.9%
<b>TOTAL families referred for Family Support Service with successful engagement</b>	<b>1728</b>	98	307	290	287	982	56.8%
<b>TOTAL families referred for Family Support Service with successful outcomes</b>	<b>1728</b>	0	88	176	258	522	30.2%

Appendix 2

DSG	Referrals with successful engagements /outcomes (paid for) 2018-19	Carry forward underspend from 2018-19	Budget for 2019-20	TOTAL BUDGET FOR 2019-20
Cannock	72/51	£100,500.00	£180,000	£280,500.00
East Staffordshire	90/40	£143,000.00	£220,000	£363,000.00
Lichfield	30/10	£107,900.00	£136,500	£244,400.00
Newcastle	42/23	£179,959.00	£226,296	£406,255.00
South Staffordshire	68/45	£68,362.00	£143,920	£212,282.00
Stafford	41/33	£119,000.00	£166,250	£285,250.00
Staffordshire Moorlands	45/18	£107,730.00	£153,900	£261,630.00
	388/220	£826,451.00	£1,226,866.00	£2,053,317.00