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| Meeting title | SCHOOLS FORUM |
| Date | Tuesday 7 th December 2021 – via Teams |
| Forum Members Present | Jo Marsh (Chair), Alun Williams, Claire Crowther, Cllr Dine Romero, Kevin Burnett, Louise Malik, Roz Lambert, Steven Mackay, |
| Forum Members Not Present | Colleen Collett, Dawn Sage, Jo Stoaling, Sara Willis |
| Observers | Amelia Hartley |
| Officers Present | Christopher Wilford, Heather Brumby, Mandy Bishop, Mary Kearney-Knowles, Olwyn Donnelly, Philip Frankland, Richard Morgan, Rosemary Collard, Samantha Bailey (notes) |
| Officers Not Present | Justine Kill |
| Distribution | As above |
| Next meeting | 1 st February 2022 |

| 1. | Apologies Received | ACTION |
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| | JM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above. | |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | |
| | No declarations were made. | |
| 3. | Minutes of the last meeting 28th September 2021 | |
| | The minutes of the meeting were agreed as accurate, with the correction of item 4, third line; 'split site school will adopt this mechanism'. The following actions were agreed as complete with the following update: JM thanked PF for the Early Years Funding letter. JM to circulate the Early Years Funding letter. | JM |
| 4. | Family Support and Play Service | |
| | HB updated that, following last report in February 2021, Southside and Bath Area Play Project have been awarded the Family Support and Play Service contract, and there have been no issues to date. She requested to continue to report into the School's Forum twice a year to provide an update on how the funding is benefiting local families and is happy to include specific areas in the report as requested by attendees. The following comments and questions were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CW asked if there is a sense that the service could be utilised more by | |

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| | <p>secondary schools and HB advised that the service is for all school aged children and families, but most referrals come from primary settings as an early intervention and preventative service. It would be beneficial to promote with secondary schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KB asked if the referrals are from primary schools direct or from behaviour and attendance panels. HB advised that the data shows mostly directly from schools into the service, but she will look at the detail closer for the next report. The Early Help Assessment Panel also do refer and knowing where the referrals come from may help give a clearer picture on where the support is reaching or not reaching. • MKK thanked HB for the clear press release and suggested re-sharing it with various forums to promote uptake. HB agreed this would be a great idea. • JM asked if the service could be promoted more in secondary schools; and AW agreed that he is not aware this has been offered to secondary schools and added that it does time it does take a long time for a referral to come to fruition. SM was also unaware if it has been signposted or not but he will explore. • AW fed back that it is unclear what the family support workers, and sometimes social workers, role is and how they work towards the same goals with schools rather than in conflict. MKK advised that the description of the service, since the new model in November 2021, is much broader and it would be helpful to share the service specification to give a shared understanding. HB to provide an extract of the service specification and share the early help offer documents when finalised. <p><u>It was agreed that the Family Support and Play Service will continue to report into the School's Forum twice a year.</u></p> | HB |
| 5. | SEND Strategy | |
| | <p>RC advised that the Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) Strategy documents are publicly available on the Live Well website: https://livewell.bathnes.gov.uk/special-educational-need-or-disability-send/professionals-and-senco-section/professionals-general</p> <p>The following comments and questions were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM asked about the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and RC advised that all settings would like to have an offer to schools to support implementing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHP), which they are inline to do once they have the capacity. This would be a new offer. • KB asked if there is a one-page document which links all these jigsaw pieces of support, which we can show which services become available at which point. RC advised that it does link together, and it is | |

something OD and herself could map out. KB added that some Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) may be doing their own SEND provision alongside this support, and it would be good to know if it is working together or if there is duplication of an offer. OD advised that she has a meeting with the MATs this week to have this conversation.

- RL asked what available pressure is there to put on the health sector and RC agreed that she has struggled to get the Occupational Therapy (OT) reports back, due to capacity, but funding has been provided to help support this. The teams do prioritise the statutory work, and she clarified that waiting on an OT report does not necessarily hold up a EHCP unless it is a major part.
- SM asked if there is any support for schools in developing Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO's), as appointing SENCO's is an issue. The school are fortunate to have an assistant SENCO, which they are putting time and money into developing both roles, but it would be useful to have support for schools, and perhaps a pool of people to help develop the career route. He added that the quality of SEND provision in schools is directly linked to the quality of their SENCO. RC advised that Bath College run an accredited course, which the team oversee, but it is an interesting point for consideration, and it is something that can be discussed with the MATs.
- AW fed back that it has been a pleasure to work with the SEND team in B&NES. He highlighted that the case load for SENCO's is a concern for both primary and secondary schools, which does not make the job very desirable. RC agreed that the number of children with ECHP's in mainstream schools is putting pressure on the system throughout. AW added that there is a need to ensure teachers and leaders are trained and supported around SEND, to make it accessible to all staff.
- SM advised that their SENCO spends all their time dealing with EHCP and related administration, rather than spending any time supporting learning. RC advised that any new ECHP will go to the school for consultation to work through what is achievable on the plan, and there is a lot of quality assurance built into the plans, but there is always room for improvement. The SEND review may help support a standardised plan. DR asked if there is any scope for investment, to free up the SENCO's time from the administration tasks, and AW advised that it is not always simple as getting admin support as they would need support or qualification to take on this work. The number of ECHPs has not only increased but their severity has increased as well.
- JM asked how sufficiency and data fits in, and RC advised that the team have been working with their Business Intelligence team to get better data, which could be brought to another meeting. **RC to bring a data presentation to a future Schools Forum.**
- JM asked about the timescales in the action plan and RC advised that COVID has impacted longer than anticipated, so there may be delays

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| | <p>on these timescales.</p> <p>JM thanked RC for the report and reminded that the information is publicly available online.</p> | |
| 6. | Hospital Education and Reintegration Service | |
| | <p>OD explained that there is an increase in demand for the Hospital Education and Reintegration Service (HERS) nationally and internationally. The service is being recommissioned in 2022, and the new financial model needs to be sustainable. She explained that the proposal today is to focus on the financial model only.</p> <p>OD presented the new financial model, highlighting that for every week the child is in the hospital, then the school is recharged for the same number of weeks. She clarified that the old model is no longer fit for purpose, as the pupils are now there for predominantly mental health reasons and are physically fitter to be able to be in education for more hours per week.</p> <p>The following comments and questions were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LM asked if the schools could be in a position of paying more than the education received, and OD confirmed that would not. OD explained that the medic stipulates how long the child is able to be in education, and the HERS provides a wider support than education alone. AW fed back that this information is not clear as it does feel that the children are not getting a lot of value from the provision. The group discussed the arrangement for block and individual recharging and RM reminded that this paper is trying to establish a fair and transparent methodology. <p>OD to share the HERS service specification.</p> <p><u>The group agreed to move to a weekly Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) rate based on the annual rate from the year.</u></p> | OD |
| 7. | Early Years Funding | |
| | <p>PF explained that this is an information paper, and a more detailed paper will come to the next meeting. He highlighted that the government announced details about budgets back in October 2021 but have only just provided the detail a week ago. The additional sums of money will be allocated, and there is a percentage increase, but realistically it may still only provide a stable position, and even a regress in some cases.</p> <p>There was a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Department for Education (DfE) finally published showing how poor the funding rates are when compared to the DfE's own research. The DfE have acknowledged the feedback on the recruitment and retention pressures in the sector and have now allocated two people to look at this impact on the sector and prepare a report, which B&NES will be supporting.</p> <p>The following comments and questions were noted:</p> | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL thanked PF, and agreed recruitment and retention is very difficult. AW agreed that recruitment is very difficult across all roles. CC added that the 'Breaking Point' paper from the Early Years Alliance is useful to summarise the pressure on the sector, and she advised that this is the first time they are having to turn away children as they cannot provide suitable staffing. This is going to put on pressure elsewhere, so it is important the conversation is continued. • DR offered her support in writing letters to the appropriate minister and KB suggested that Wera Hobhouse MP could also be included to ask direct questions to the House of Lords. PF advised that she has done this in the past and is well informed on this issue. PF to bring an update on Early Years Funding for the February 2022 agenda. | PF |
| 8. AOB | | |
| | JM thanked all the attendees for their support. | |
| 9. Date of next meeting | | |
| | 1 st February 2022 | |