

iCollege Review

Report being considered by:	School Funding Forum on 13 th March 2023	
Initial Report Author:	Michelle Sancho & Jacquie Davies	
Updates Report Author	Nicola Ponton & Jacquie Davies	
Item for:	Information & Decision	By: All Forum members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1** To confirm the funding method proposed for iCollege in March 2022 taking into account the increased demand for iCollege since the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** For the group to confirm a method of 'up-front' funding for iCollege.
- 2.2** To consider the recommendation for additional places at iCollege. This is dependent on new premises for both provisions:
- 6 additional places at Pod Plus for EHCP learners so this provision can be extended to include all of KS3, including year 9
 - 12 additional places at Integration to allow Year 7 & 8 learners to follow a more age-appropriate curriculum separate from older year groups

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?

Yes: ☐

No: ☒

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1** A report to Schools' Forum on 23.2.21 identified key issues to be taken forward by a task and finish group. These included addressing a lack of clarity around the roll status of learners at iCollege, inconsistent practice and different financial arrangements in the funding of placements, clarity around admission procedures especially for primary schools, forward planning in relation to EHCP places and the new SEMH provision. This was reviewed in the previous HFF report presented on 1st of March 2022 and therefore most of these issues will not be commented on further.
- 3.2** Over the last year there has been a significant increase in the need to offer short-term provision at iCollege particularly for Year 7 & 8 learners who, historically, were placed at iCollege much less frequently. There is also a requirement for complex need placements, to avoid PEX and for EHCP learners. The increase in demand for placement is linked to the recovery from the pandemic. Young people's mental

health, emotional wellbeing and behaviour has been significantly impacted and this has led to an increase in dysregulated behaviour and EBSA.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1** A task and finish group was established and a number of meetings were held between September and December 2021. These meetings were a mixture of meetings of the full group and specialist sub-groups. Legal and financial expertise was sought. The proposal from this task and finish group was considered at the Heads Funding Forum on the 1st March 2022.
- 4.2** Financial modelling was undertaken to determine how many places could be offered based on an annual budget of £829K (see Appendix A). The total inclusion budget allocated for 2023/24 is £881K and therefore Appendix A has been updated. It was agreed that a variety of places should be offered including placements for permanently excluded pupils, placements jointly funded (50/50) by the local authority and schools and commissioned places funded 100% by the local authority for learners that have not been permanently excluded (PEX). Commissioned places would be for complex primary aged learners and would have criteria applied to places. It is hoped that these places will help to avoid permanent exclusion for vulnerable learners. Proposed numbers are outlined in section 5 of this report. Any remaining funding would be used to support any additional costs where learners require above SEMH 1 band funding.
- 4.3** In response to a request for clarity around admission procedures, a guidance document has been produced. Please see Appendix B for further details. The Local Authority SEMH Manager will confirm any placement that requires LA funding.
- 4.4** The key issues highlighted in the previous report and those made known to the task and finish group were addressed. Recommendations to address these are outlined in section 5.
- 4.5** The SEN strategy originally suggested a decrease in placement at iCollege over time gradually reducing by 13 by 2029. This aspiration was agreed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and does not reflect the current need for additional support for learners with SEMH. Please see Appendix C reflecting the increased demand for iCollege places.

5. Proposals

5.1 LA to pay up front for 50/50 places

iCollege deal with a variable and unpredictable flow of money throughout the year. The current practice involves termly recharges. Paying up-front at the start of the financial year for 50/50 places will provide more stability from the beginning of the financial year. Monitoring meetings will take place each short term to confirm the uptake of places. All placements that require LA funding will be confirmed by the LA SEMH Manager.

5.2 Short term places to be delivered in termly blocks

Short term places are initially agreed for a term (6 weeks) and then reviewed on an approximately half term basis. Primary placements are currently offered for 3 days

for an initial 6 week period. Whilst it has been agreed at point 5.7 that schools are responsible for providing suspension provision this data is useful in suggesting how many pupils are struggling and may benefit from in-reach support from iCollege. The huge increase in demand for Integration placements is reflected in the number of suspensions which is documented in Appendix C.

5.3 Commissioned, PEX and 50/50 places supported by financial modelling

Financial modelling has forecast how many places can be allocated based on the current iCollege budget. The recommendation is that 15 places are allocated for permanently excluded learners, complex cases and pro-active inclusion work. In West Berkshire we had 9 PEX in total in 2020-21, 16 PEX 21-22 and for half the academic year 22-23, we have 12. Not all PEX learners will need to remain at iCollege for an extended period of time, but some learners may need to do so. This data would suggest 10 places would be required with an additional 5 places for either PEXs or complex cases. If any additional 100% funded places are needed, these could be considered on a case by case basis in exceptional circumstances.

EHCP funded places would include up to 6 Pod and 12 Pod Plus places which would be funded at the start of the financial year by SEN. Currently iCollege has 25 EHCP learners on roll including Pod and Pod Plus. These are usually long term placements and the costs are agreed at the start of the placement, hence there should be no issue with up-front funding. From the 66 places at iCollege 9 are notionally SEN places, excluding 6 Pod and 12 Pod Plus places.

5.4 Additional Provision

In Appendix E, the case is made for an additional 18 places to be made available at iCollege. This is subject to agreement by this group and suitable premises being available. Therefore it is suggested that these placements be funded from Sept 2023 to Easter 2024 in one upfront payment made in Sept 2023. This provision would then be included in the main payment from April 2024. Please see Appendix D for the breakdown of this funding.

5.5 6th form for EHCP only

6th form places are greatly reduced and EHCP students mainly attend. The recommendation is that iCollege 6th form is in place for EHCP students only. This has been in place from the academic year 21/22.

5.6 Pod/Pod Plus

The SEN Strategy and Deficit Recovery Strategy have identified savings that may be realised by the establishment of SEMH provision within West Berkshire. Modelling has projected a gradual reduction in SEN places at iCollege due to the availability of local SEMH provision with the use of Pod and Pod Plus being gradually reduced. The projection in the reduction of places is shown below in table 1. Due to a significant change in pupil presentation post Covid, this is no longer viable. Additional high quality, cost effective SEMH provision is needed. The proposal is to extend Pod Plus to include 6 Year 9 placements, but this is subject to suitable premises being available.

Table 1

Financial year	No. of placements	Reduction
2022-23	84	
2023-24	82	-2
2024-25	80	-2
2025-26	78	-2
2026-27	76	-2
2027-28	74	-2
2028-29	71	-3
Total		-13

5.7 Roll status

Following consultation with secondary head teachers and with legal, it has been agreed that all short term (in-reach) placements will be dual roll. Permanent places (managed move to iCollege) are to be available from Year 10 onwards. The permanent places will be on a single roll status at iCollege. These are only available for cases where extensive interventions have been previously put in place, including short term intervention at iCollege. The roll status recommendation will be reviewed again with secondary heads following the outcome of the exclusion guidance consultation.

5.7 Suspension (Fixed Term) Provision

Schools are responsible for providing suspension provision. Responsibility falls to the local authority following permanent exclusion. From April 2022 schools will be expected to pay 100% of suspension provision. This provision will be available only if spaces are available at iCollege.

5.8 PEX places to be invoiced 6 weeks after exclusion

To avoid incorrect invoicing following decisions at independent review meetings, iCollege will invoice the local authority for PEX places no earlier than 6 weeks after the exclusion.

5.9 Hours/Package to be agreed on entry

It is recommended that hours for each placement and package details are agreed for each learner on entry. These are subject to change but are to be agreed with schools and the local authority.

5.10 Invest to save opportunities

There may be opportunities to temporarily increase the iCollege offer from time to time as part of invest to save opportunities.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** The task and finish group have made a series of recommendations based on current issues. These have been widely consulted on and aim to improve clarity and support the financial operation of iCollege going forward.

7. Consultation and Engagement for previous report

Lisa Potts	Finance Manager
Jacquie Davies	HT iCollege
Holly Whitwham	Principal Solicitor (People)
Nicola Ponton	SEN Manager
Jane Seymour	Service Manager (SEN & Disabled Children)
Keith Harvey	HT St Nicolas CE Junior School
Gemma Piper	HT Kennet School
Lucy Hillyard	Therapeutic Thinking Lead
Ros Arthur	Exclusions Officer
Kate House	HT The Ilsleys and Hampstead Norreys
Maureen Sims	Chair of Governors (iCollege)
Ian Pearson / Michelle Sancho	Head of Education
Secondary Headteachers	Secondary Collaborative Members

8. Appendices

- 8.1** Appendix A – Financial Modelling March 2022
- 8.2** Appendix B – Guidance Document
- 8.3** Appendix C – Exclusion & Suspension data
- 8.4** Appendix D – Data showing increased demand for icollege
- 8.5** Appendix E – Financial Modelling Additional Provision 2023
- 8.6** Appendix F – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix A - Financial Modelling March 2022

Pupil Referral Unit Funding- Budget held by Michelle Sancho					
Place Funding Budget 2022/23					660,000
Funded places	66 @		10,000		£660,000
Pupil Referral Budget Top Up funding Bande 2021/22					£881,000
Previously considered models					
Places					
	50/50	£		no of days	
56	100	56		190	£595,840
10	100	112		190	£212,800
66					£808,640
Places					
15	100 Pex	112	100 @ 112/day	190	£319,200.00
27	50/50	56	50 @ 112/day	190	£287,280
10	100	112	100 @112/day	190	£212,800
52					£819,280.00
Places					
10	100 Pex	112	100 @ 112/day	190	£212,800
37	50/50	56	50 @ 112/day	190	£393,680
10	100	112	100 @112/day	190	£212,800
57					£819,280
Places					
15	100	112	50 @ 112/day	190	£319,200
42	50/50	56	100 @112/day	190	£446,880
57					£766,080

Appendix B – Guidance Document



Accessing iCollege - Guidance

What does iCollege provide:

Provision to the LA to enable it to discharge its duty for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of social and emotional mental health needs would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies to all children of compulsory school age resident in the local authority area. iCollege delivers this in the form of:

- Off site reactive 'out-reach' provision to improve mainstream engagement for Key Stages 1 to 4
 - Long term placements to support learners achieve personal and academic success for Years 9, 10 & 11
 - Bespoke packages including core subjects to meet individual learners needs Key Stages 1 - 5
 - Short term pro-active 'in-reach' programmes to sustain mainstream engagement for Key Stage 3
- Fixed term exclusion/suspension support for schools and in the case of permanent exclusion, from day 6 provide alternative provision on behalf of the LA (Key Stages 1 – 5)

How to access places:

- Following the West Berkshire Council Therapeutic Thinking Support and Signpost (SAS) Stepped Approach
- All placements result from discussion with appropriate stakeholders such as parent(s)/carer(s), the local authority, Pupil Placement Panel (where appropriate) and individual schools.
- Parent(s)/carer(s) are unable to apply directly to iCollege or via West Berkshire Council's School Admissions Team

Long term placements can be accessed through:

- Secondary Pupil Placement Panel ('PPP') that takes place 9 times per year for non-EHCP learners (PPP paperwork to be completed)
- Annual Review Process / SEND Panel for primary and secondary EHCP learners (Annual Review paperwork to be completed)
- Direct contact with iCollege for short term 'in-reach' places or 'out-reach' support (iCollege 'request for support' paperwork to be completed)
- Places for primary and secondary permanent and fixed term exclusions via liaison with the West Berkshire Council Exclusions Officer

Length of the school day:

iCollege complies with statutory guidance issued by the Department of Education

The school day runs during 'normal school hours' and is typically between 9am and 3pm. However, this can vary between sites and, according to specific individual learning needs and learning programmes developed to meet those.

Where and what is iCollege:

iCollege The Pod is located in Newtown Road, Newbury, RG14 7BQ and is a six-place specialist day provision for learners in years 4 to 6 with SEMH and complex needs. Learners all have an EHCP with SEMH as their primary need. The Pod is a high engagement / low demand learning environment. Staff are trained in, and apply the principles of Therapeutic

INSPIRATIONKS1&2
Foxglove Way, Thatcham
Berks, RG18 4DH
01635 877114

INTEGRATIONKS3&4
22 Highview, Caloot
Reading, Berks, RG31 4XD
01189 416636

INTERVENTIONYS9&10
88 Newtown Road, Newbury
Berks, RG14 7BT
01635 49397

INDEPENDENCEY11&KS5
Richmond House, Bath Road
Newbury, Berks, RG14 1QY
01635 48872



<p>Thinking. Learners are supported to develop their sense of self and learn to manage their behaviours and emotions.</p> <p>iCollege Pod Plus is located in Urquart Road, Thatcham, RG19 4RE and is a 10 place specialist day provision similar to The Pod but for learners in years 7 and 8 with a 'moving on' plan post year 8.</p> <p>iCollege Inspiration is located in Foxglove Way, Thatcham, RG18 4HD and provides short and long term placements for KS1 and 2 learners who are struggling to access mainstream education, including learners who are looking for re-integration back to mainstream or special school following a permanent exclusion or extended fixed-term exclusion. Some learners have EHCPs, but not all. Inspiration also provides an 'out-reach' service to primary schools.</p> <p>iCollege Integration is located at High View, Calcot, RG31 4XD and provides short term placements for KS3 and 4 learners who are struggling to access mainstream education, including learners who are looking for re-integration back to mainstream or special school following a permanent exclusion or extended fixed-term exclusion. Some learners have EHCPs, but not all. Integration also provides an 'out-reach' service to secondary schools.</p> <p>iCollege Intervention is located in Newtown Road, Newbury, RG14 7BQ and provides long term placements for year 9 and 10 learners who follow the National Curriculum and study 3 core subjects; English, maths and science. In addition, they study ICT, art, PSE, and PE as well as having access to drama, music and therapeutic outdoor activities. Learners work in small groups and are often supported 1:1.</p> <p>iCollege Independence is located on Bath Road, Speen, RG14 1QY and provides long term placements for year 11 – 13 learners with a 'complete curriculum' including 8 learning opportunities for all learners. Independence offers learners access to national qualifications at the appropriate levels and an intensive careers / transition programme</p> <p>NB – iCollege is not an all-through school.</p>
<p>Funding:</p> <p>High Needs Block funding - £10k per place / £820k, paid to iCollege at the start of the academic year (66 places plus 6 x Pod and 10 x Pod Plus)</p> <p>Local Authority Funding for long or short term places 21/22 - 50% of top-up funding, unless PEX or special circumstances when 100%</p> <p>Schools for long or short term places 21/22 - 50% top-up funding, unless PEX or special circumstances when 0%</p> <p>EHCP learners – 100% LA if placed via Annual Review / SEND Panel, or 50% schools and 50% LA if negotiated with iCollege outside Annual Review / SEND Panel</p> <p>(CiC from out of area, but living in West Berks without EHCPs are funded by West Berks. CiC with EHCPs are usually funded by the placing 'home' authority)</p>
<p>Top-up Costs 21/22:</p> <p>Band 1 = £112 per day basic rate</p> <p>Band 2 = £148</p> <p>Band 3 = £183</p> <p>Bespoke = negotiation with referring body</p> <p>(Banding 2, 3 and bespoke relates to identified and agreed learner needs, usually only for EHCP learners)</p>
<p>Transport:</p> <p>iCollege complies with the West Berkshire Council's Home to School Transport Policy</p>
<p>Refreshments:</p> <p>iCollege offers all learners a midday meal, breakfast / snacks and tea/coffee/juice during the school day</p>

INSPIRATION KS1&2
Foxglove Way, Thatcham
Berks, RG18 4HD
01635 877114

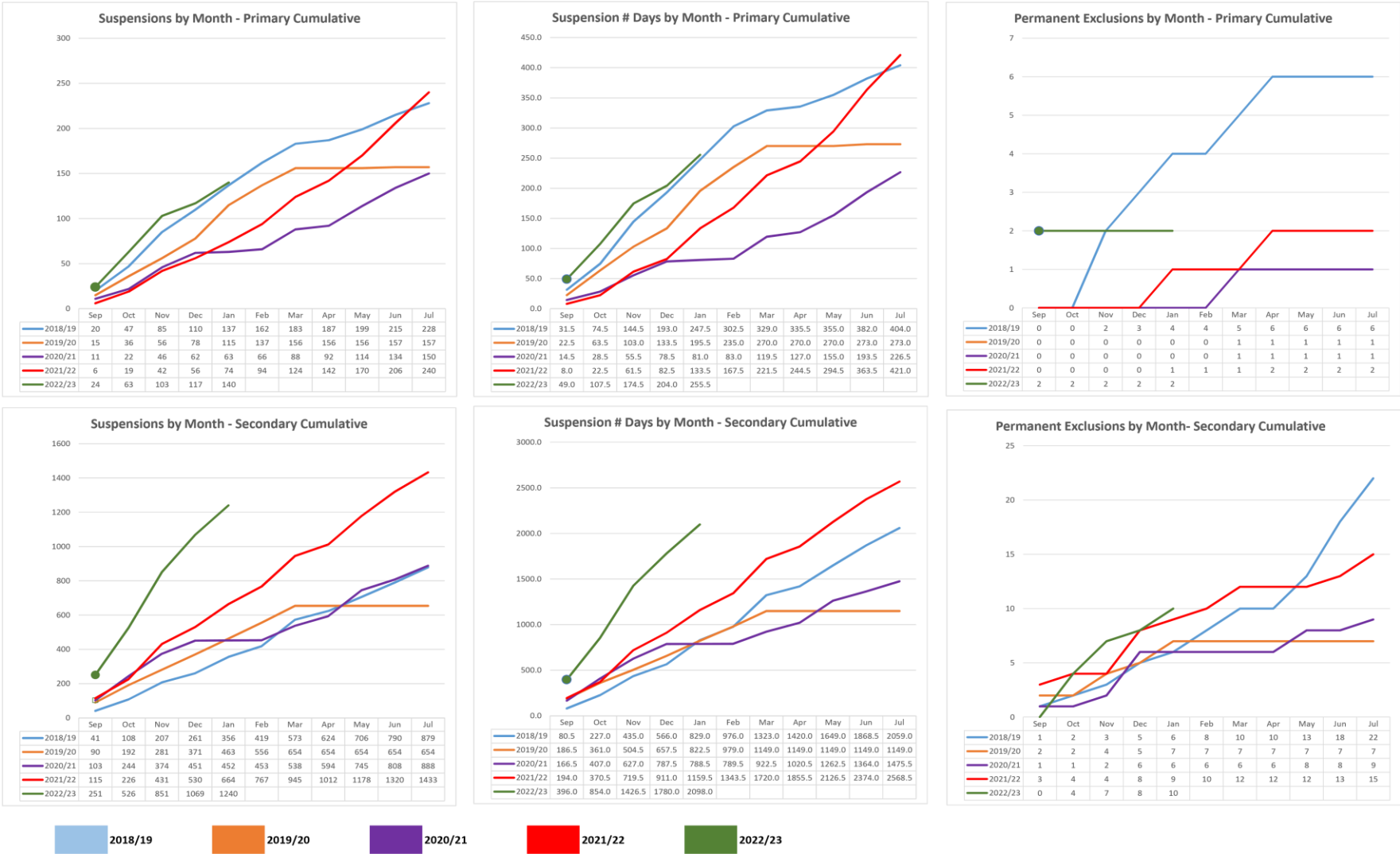
INTEGRATION KS3&4
22 Highview, Calcot
Reading, Berks, RG31 4XD
01189 416636

INTERVENTION Y9&10
88 Newtown Road, Newbury
Berks, RG14 7BT
01635 49397

INDEPENDENCE Y11&KS5
Richmond House, Bath Road
Newbury, Berks, RG14 1QY
01635 48872

Appendix C Exclusion & Suspension data

Exclusions summary by month



Appendix D Data showing increased demand for icollege

Secondary PPP referrals to iCollege for long-term INCLUSION places

	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7	PEX total
19/20	6	6	6	1	0	5
20/21	6	6	2	2	0	3
21/22	6	9	10	3	3	5
22/23 (to January 2023)	3	2	1 2 x dual roll	0 1 x dual roll	0 1 x dual roll	3

Secondary referrals to iCollege for long-term EHCP places

	Year 14	Year 13	Year 12	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7
19/20	2	2	1	4	4	4	0	4
20/21	1	0	1	5	3	1	4 (dual roll)	0
21/22	0	3	1	4	3	4	3 (Pod+)	10 (Pod+)
22/23 (to 31.01.23)	0	0	4	4	5	3	7	3

Total Numbers long-term places @ Intervention and Independence

	Year 14	Year 13	Year 12	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Total
19/20	1	4	7	26	14	5	0	57
20/21	0	3	4	28	11	6	0	52
21/22	0	0	4	24	10	10	1 (late move summer 22 / safeguarding)	49
22/23 (to 31.01.23)	0	0	2	21	13	5	0	41 (5 months)

Total numbers short-term places @ Integration

	Year 13	Year 12	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	Year 7	Total	PEX total
19/20	0	0	1	16 / 3	13 / 4	5 / 3	7	42	10
20/21	0	0	10 / 1	9 / 2	10 / 2	14 / 1	5 / 1	48	7
21/22	0	0	7 / 2	18 / 2	20 / 5	13 / 2	14 / 1	72	12
22/23 (to 31.01.23)	0	0	8 / 2	14 / 2	21 / 4	9 / 2	4 / 1	56 (5 months)	11

Integration try to meet all demand for places. In order to do so, in 22/23 placements have been reduced from 5 days to 3 days and limited to 6 weeks.

Appendix E Financial Modelling Additional Provision 2023

Additional iCollege Provisional Budget held by Michelle Sancho & Nicola Ponton						
Place Funding Budget						
Funded places from Sept 2023 until Mar 2024						
18 @	2 out of 3 terms	£10,000	£120,000			
Funded places from April 2024 onwards						
18 @	100%	£10,000	£180,000			
Places funded for 2023-24 (inclusion budget)						
				no of days		
12 50/50		56 50@	112/day	123	£83,656	
Places funded for 2024-25						
				no of days		
12 50/50		56 50@	112/day	190	£127,680.00	
Additional 6 places be funded by SEN for EHCP students						
Total additional funding for 2023-24			£202,656			
Total additional funding for 2024-25			£307,680			

Appendix F – Equalities Impact Assessment (Stage One)

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:*
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:*
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;*
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;*
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.*
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality (the relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected, but on the significance of the impact on them):

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the Council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Schools' Forum to make:	To approve up front funding for iCollege To agree to extend provision at iCollege by 18 places
Name of Service/Directorate:	Education
Name of assessor:	N Ponton
Date of assessment:	02/02/2023

Is this a ?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ?	
Policy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	New or proposed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Function	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is changing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Service	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		

(1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	To ensure we meet the needs of vulnerable learners in West Berkshire with SEMH
Objectives:	To provide additional capacity at iCollege to meet the needs of pupils with SEMH
Outcomes:	18 additional places at iCollege will be made
Benefits:	The complex needs of young people will be met effectively locally and in a cost effective way

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this? <i>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation)</i>			
Group Affected	Potential Positive Impacts	Potential Negative Impacts	Evidence
Age			
Disability	Additional provision will be provided for young	None	These young people have been identified as having SEN by

	people with complex behaviour and emotional needs including mental health difficulties. They will be able to attend good quality provision locally and not have to travel to specialist placements		their school or via an EHCP. The evidence for increased need is supported by exclusion data and the request for Out of County placements
Gender Reassignment			
Marriage and Civil Partnership			
Pregnancy and Maternity			
Race			
Religion or Belief			
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			
Further Comments:			

(3) Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	No <input type="checkbox"/>
This service will support young people with complex SEN needs	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	No <input type="checkbox"/>
The request is to provide greater provision which will improve access for service users and better education accommodation will positively impact on employees	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered 'yes' to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a EqlA 2.

If an EqlA 2 is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the EqlA guidance and template – <http://intranet/index.aspx?articleid=32255>.

(4) Identify next steps as appropriate:	
EqlA Stage 2 required	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Owner of EqlA Stage Two:	
Timescale for EqlA Stage Two:	

Name: Nicola Ponton

Date: 05/03/2023

Please now forward this completed form to Pamela Voss, Equality and Diversity Officer (pamela.voss@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website