

Supplemental Items for Schools Forum

Monday 4th December 2023 at 5.00 pm
Via Zoom

Part I

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Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke

Service Director (Strategy & Governance)

For further information about these items, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Jessica Bailiss on (01635) 503124

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WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

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Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV)

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum on 4th December 2023

Report Author: Hester Collicutt

Item for: Discussion **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To inform the School Forum about the Delivering Better Value Programme and its initial findings.

2. Recommendation

1.1 That the report is noted.

3. Introduction/Background

3.1 Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a transformation programme managed by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) working to identify and implement local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND and place the system on a more sustainable financial footing.

3.2 The statutory override means that any DSG deficits are not included in the council's revenue budget. This override is due to end in 2025/26. Failure to mitigate the overspend in the High Needs Block will place the financial sustainability of the council at risk. It is crucial that engagement in DBV leads to sustainable changes which reduce the High Needs Block overspend.

3.3 The DfE has commissioned Newton Europe Consultancy to support LAs in the initial phase of the programme up to submission of grant application. The DBV programme is designing its support through 2 key approaches.

- **Short Term Help:** To identify sustainable changes in each LA that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND, explore options to deliver financial sustainability, and to support building an evidence-based grant application to assist the implementation of those changes.
- **Informing Long Term Reform:** Build an objective evidence base across a third of the sector, which can be used to inform future policy and reform, build a national playbook & share best practice. In future, the evidence collated and mitigating actions will inform future national programmes of similar scale and intent.

3.4 55 Local Authorities have participated in this programme, in three tranches. West Berkshire is in Tranche 3. The **diagnostic** process of Tranche 3 occurs between July 2023 and December 2023.

- 1) **Module 1:** Uses data to assess historic growth in High Needs Block (HNB) spend and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) numbers, breaking down current HNB spend by provision, understanding the trend in EHCP caseload, average cost and total cost by provision.

This enables the production of a forecast of projected growth in EHCPs and projected unit costs to clarify projected pressures on the HNB in future years. By reviewing these patterns of occurrence, it helps clarify what factors are driving HNB spend including primary need, age group and age at provision start. Key priority areas are identified to investigate further in Module 2. *(Completed October 2023)*

- 2) **Module 2:** Here the aim is to confirm the root causes of key priority areas by examining qualitative and quantitative evidence that covers individual journeys and system wide perspectives in West Berkshire. This evidence base quantifies the impact of key opportunities and puts the spotlight on the process, behavioural and digital changes that it will take to effect a positive change, improving outcomes and reducing the pressure on the HNB and promoting sustainability. *(Completed November 2023)*
- 3) **Module 3:** The output of Module 3 is an **Implementation Plan**, addressing key priority areas, for delivery of identified high impact realistic opportunities, devised with stake holders. This will form the **£1 million grant application** for the DBV Programme. This is required to be signed off by the Section 151 Officer and Executive Director of Children and Family Services before submission. Determining the maximum potential opportunity is a decision for each Local Authority to make. The Local Authority is required to return a proposal for an ambitious level of mitigation that can be delivered in their local SEND systems. The Implementation plan has to meet agreed criteria and the grant has to have been used by **31 March 2025**. *(Grant submission date by 14 December 2023)*.

3.5 Stage 2: Deficit Management Planning

This stage runs from **November 2023 – March 2024** and has two purposes.

- 1) To identify additional mitigations to complement the existing mitigations (assured) and the initial DBV diagnostic mitigations (assessed) identified by the authority in stage 1.
- 2) Stage 2 will review nine lines of enquiry which draw on mitigations being considered by other LAs and discuss their applicability to each authority in DBV.

The nine lines of enquiry: -

1. Financial Oversight and Governance
2. Early Support in education settings and Inclusion
3. Effective Management of Transitions and Step Down
4. Sufficiency Planning and Strategy
5. Commissioning Practice
6. Top Up Payments and Banding Arrangements
7. Alternative Provision and Education Other Than At School

8. Block Transfers
9. Contributions for Health and Social Care Provision

The Local Authority submits its deficit plan by **12 January 2024**

The DBV Programme Board reviews submissions by 14 March 2024 and awards grants accordingly before **31 March 2024**.

4. Options for Consideration

4.1 The DBV Implementation Plan will integrate, and support aspects of **West Berkshire's 2023 -2028 SEND Strategy**. The six identified strategic priorities in the draft SEND Strategy are:

- 1) The Early Years
- 2) The Universal Offer including mainstream school SEND provision
- 3) Increasing Local Specialist Provision
- 4) Pathways to Adulthood
- 5) Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and Young People's Mental Health
- 6) Short Breaks and Respite

This strategy programme and the DBV programme will be delivered by strategy implementation groups with representation from health, social care, educational settings, the voluntary sector and families themselves. Cross-agency accountability and leadership will be provided to the whole strategy and the DBV programme by the SEND Strategic Partnership Board which reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Head of Education is the Senior Responsible Owner with the Service Manager for the SEN & Disabled Children's Service supporting the implementation of the programme.

The delivery of the DBV programme will be reported to and monitored externally by the DfE.

5. Proposals

5.1 The outcomes from Module 1 Indicate that Maintained Special Schools (MSS) have historically been the largest area of spend in West Berkshire, followed by Independent Non Maintained (INMSS) and Alternative Provision (AP). MSS is forecasted to remain as one of the two biggest areas of spend in forecasting scenarios, driven mainly by unit cost growth due to capacity constraints in place. Expenditure in INMSS is expected to surpass MSS by 2028, driven by unit cost growth and caseload increase. These areas need to be addressed in order to reduce pressure on the HNB and impact on the overall deficit.

5.2 West Berkshire ranks in the top 20% amongst the DBV local authorities for its MSS unit cost and has the largest unit cost compared to its statistical neighbours. More work will need to be done on this. Module 2 activities will look to uncover the root causes that drive the growth in expenditure. The key focus areas are: Both unit cost and caseload growth in MSS and INMSS.

5.3 Stake holders from Schools, Health, Social Care, Local Authority and parent group representation attended a co-produced Implementation Planning Meeting on 16 November to identify priority areas within the SEND strategy to be supported through the DBV Programme. The meeting considered ways of improving outcomes and access to services at an earlier stage and ensuring mainstream provision is supported and equipped to meet the increased demand for SEND support whilst ensuring there is a sufficiency of specialist provision within the area. This will form the basis of the grant application proposal.

5.4 Given the high level of spend on specialist placements, of all types, more work will need to be done to consider approaches to inclusion and support available, utilising intervention, before specialist placements are requested. Lack of parental confidence is a key theme in the survey feedback, so it will be essential to take a system wide approach to build confidence. Approaches to the commissioning and procurement of SEN support and placements will be prioritised alongside a review of funding bands.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Identified proposals, initially funded through the DBV Grant must evidence sustainability beyond the end of the grant period (31 March 2025) and therefore any programmes will require wider transformational change across the system.

6.2 The expectation of the DfE, who will be monitoring the DBV programme, will be that a plan is produced to bring HNB spending in line by 2028 (which includes the recovery of the current deficit). This will be challenging but is essential to secure long-term financial sustainability of the council. The whole system must share ownership of this challenge and work together to address issues which are contributing to the current pressures.

7. Heads' Funding Group Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Heads Funding Group note the priorities contained within the SEND strategy whilst recognising the limitations and controls that will be in place through the DBV programme to manage and mitigate spend on SEND.

8. Appendices

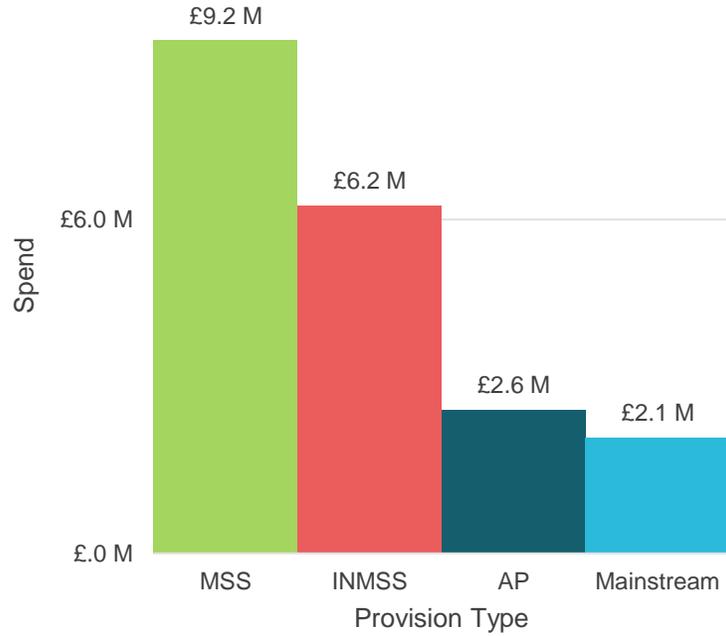
Appendix A - DBV Programme Module 2 Findings

West Berkshire Module 2 Executive Summary

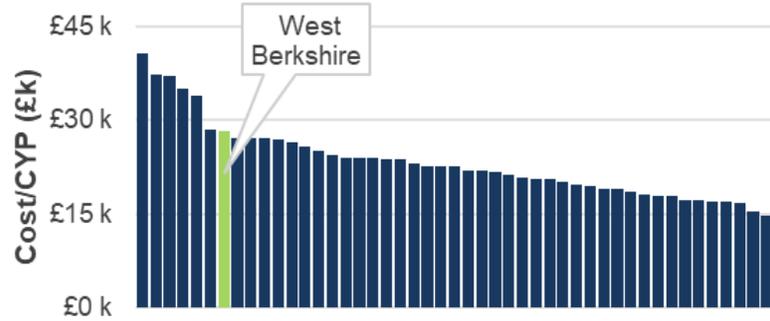


Maintained Special Schools and Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools are the areas of largest opportunity

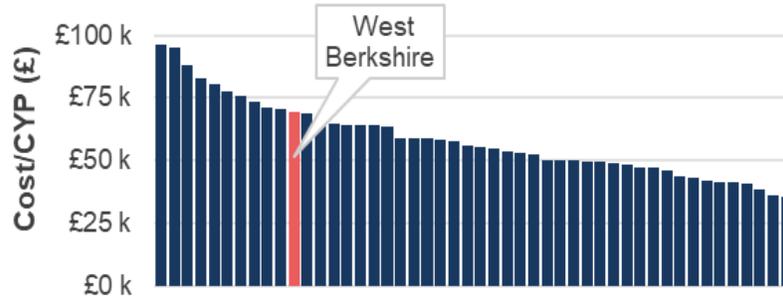
2022/23 HNB Expenditure Breakdown



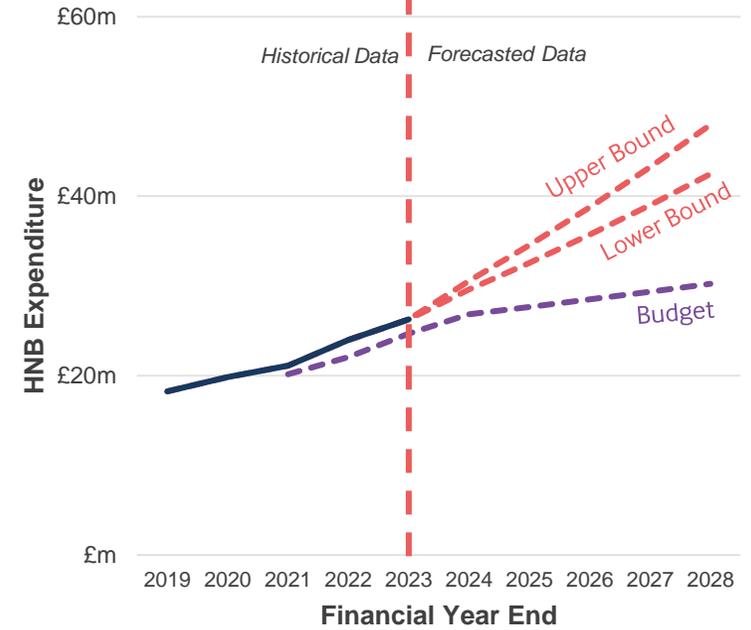
MSS Average Unit Cost Benchmarking



INMSS Average Unit Cost Benchmarking



Projected Unmitigated HNB expenditure



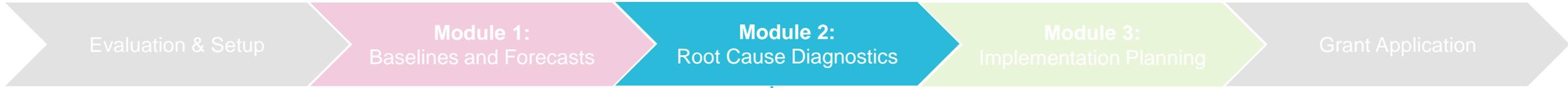
Historical trends indicated that **MSS is the biggest area of spend** in West Berkshire, accounting for a third of expenditure in 2022/2023. **MSS, INMSS, AP and Mainstream schools account for 77%** of total spend in 2022/2023.

West Berkshire supports the **smallest number of EHCPs** per 100 in 2-18 population compared to its statistical neighbours, although this number is increasing. The average unit cost in both MSS and INMSS is above the DBV LA and statistical neighbour averages in West Berkshire. In particular, MSS unit cost is larger than 80% of DBV LAs.

Expenditure in the **unmitigated ('do-nothing') scenario** in West Berkshire is expected to rise to almost £48m by 2028 in the upper bound scenario. With budget forecasted to reach only £30m this leaves an in-year deficit of £18m. The unmitigated cumulative deficit is expected to rise to £59.7m in the upper bound scenario.

Module 2 Outputs and Approach

Objective: To identify sustainable changes that will drive high quality outcomes for CYP & support you in developing your grant application



Evidence Base

What? A holistic body of evidence, built on data and the perspectives of system partners, highlighting the most impactful opportunities to improve outcomes and shining a spotlight on the process, behavioural and digital changes required.

How? A variety of investigative activities are conducted, ranging from case reviews and surveys, to process mapping and variational analysis. A spectrum of stakeholders are engaged to ensure we are gathering a faithful understanding of the system, its challenges, and the levers for change.



Opportunities and Impact Profiles

What? Quantifying the impact of these opportunities on Children and Young People and expenditure. Forecasting how this impact will manifest over time, linking it with the unmitigated forecasting work completed during Module 1.

How? Findings from investigative activities directly inform our calculation of the size of opportunities. After the potential change has been quantified, it is incorporated into existing financial projections to give mitigated forecasts.

Module 2 engagement: the diagnostic has benefited from fantastic engagement with partners from across the West Berkshire system

Case Reviews



38 CYP

Cases were reviewed in case reviews to understand if we delivered an ideal outcome

40+ Reviewers

across education, health and social care took part

Listening Forums



5 colleagues from Health

Shared their views of the SEN system



2 primary school SENCOs

Joined us to share their views



3 colleagues from SENDIASS

Discussed key parent priorities and concerns



5 social care colleagues

Shared their experiences of supporting children and young people with SEN



2 School Visits

To special schools are planned to better understand the day to day of those in the SEN space



1 Parents & Carer

Shared their child's journey in West Berkshire

Surveys



71 Parents & Carers

Have responded to a survey



42 Education providers

across roles and settings responded to a survey

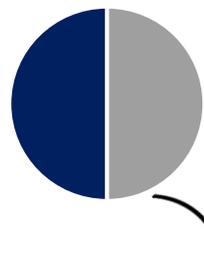
Data Analysis



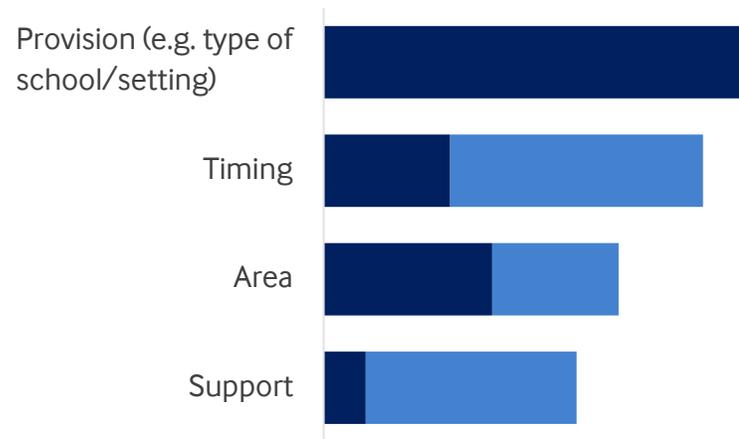
Hundreds of data points

of CYP level data were analysed to better understand variation

We investigated how we are supporting our CYP and opportunities to improve

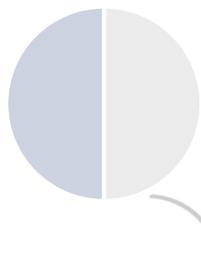


Practitioners said that **50%** of cases reviewed had a non-ideal outcome



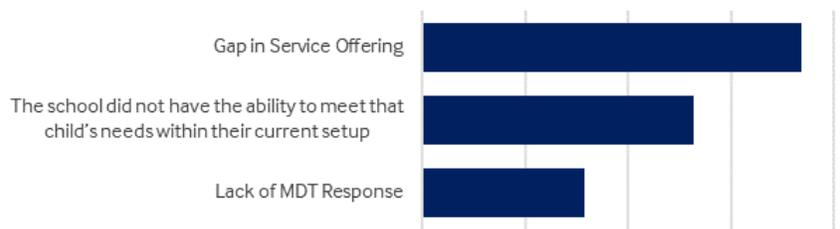
50% of the 38 cases reviewed had a non-ideal outcome, as defined by the professionals assessing the cases. For the majority of cases this was due to being in a **non-ideal provision type** for their outcomes. For MSS & INMSS Cases, practitioners **wanted to see more pupils supported in Resource Provision**. For 50% of SEMH cases reviewed, RP was also deemed **more ideal**.

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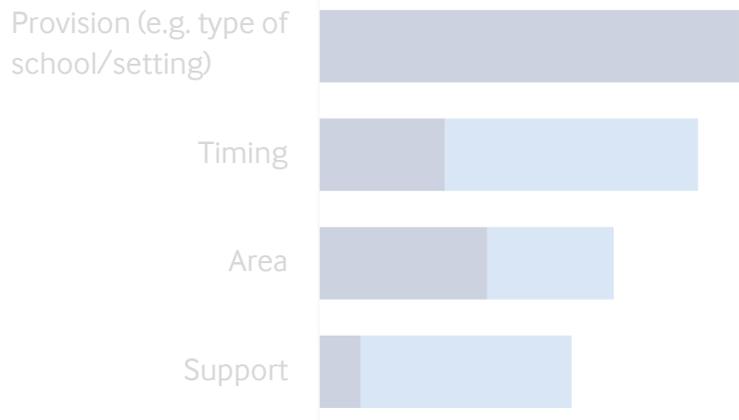
What themes contributed to achieving a non-ideal outcome?



There was deemed a gap around emotional support and a lack of **health/social care involvement when needed**



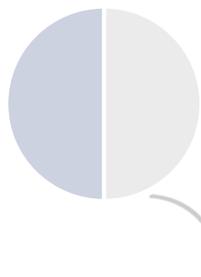
Schools inability to meet need related to the **right physical spaces** and ability to deal with **complex emotional needs, key at transition.**



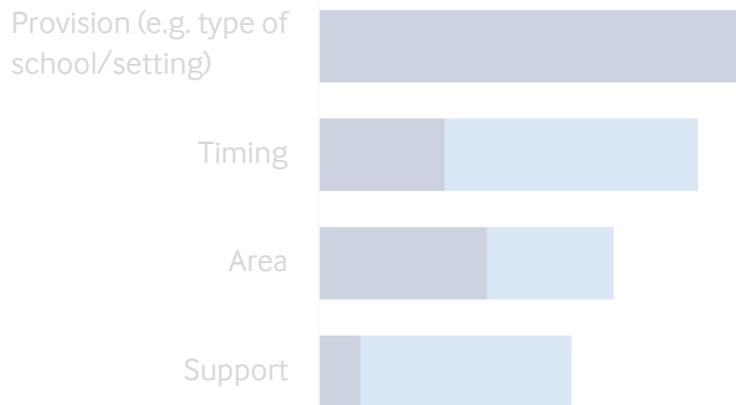
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Most prevalent themes contributing to non-ideal outcomes were gap in service offering, schools' inability to meet need, and lack of Multi-Disciplinary Team response. Gap in service offering referred to gap in support by Health, particularly for co-occurring needs, gaps in CAHMS/emotional support at transition and gap in information around services for parents/carers & Schools.

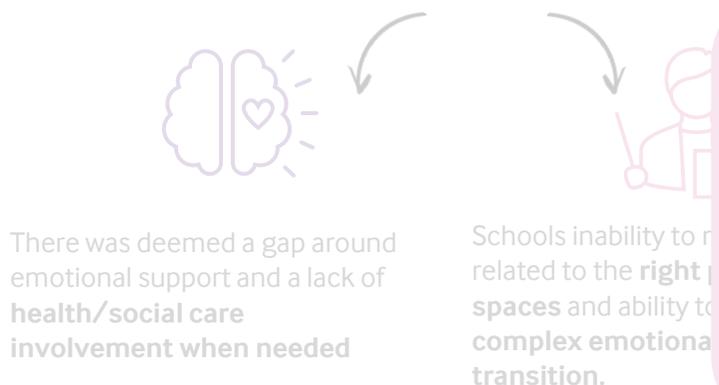
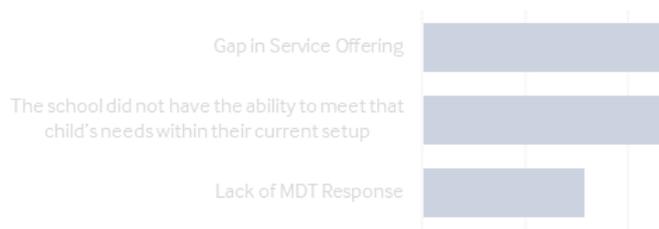
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Practitioners said that **50%** of cases reviewed had a non-ideal outcome



What themes contributed to achieving a non-ideal outcome?



54% Parents disagreed that health services were provided in a timely and effective manner

“When supporting [SEMH/EBSA learners] we need to be told who to support, we need to get the right input from the schools.” **Healthcare professional**



SENCOs and Parents/Carers both said they didn't believe the schools had the right resources to meet SEN Learners' needs.

However, with **59%** parents not feeling well communicated with by schools show this was a key priority for them.

“There was a lack of communication when I needed it most – I couldn't see the wood for the trees” – **Parent of 2**

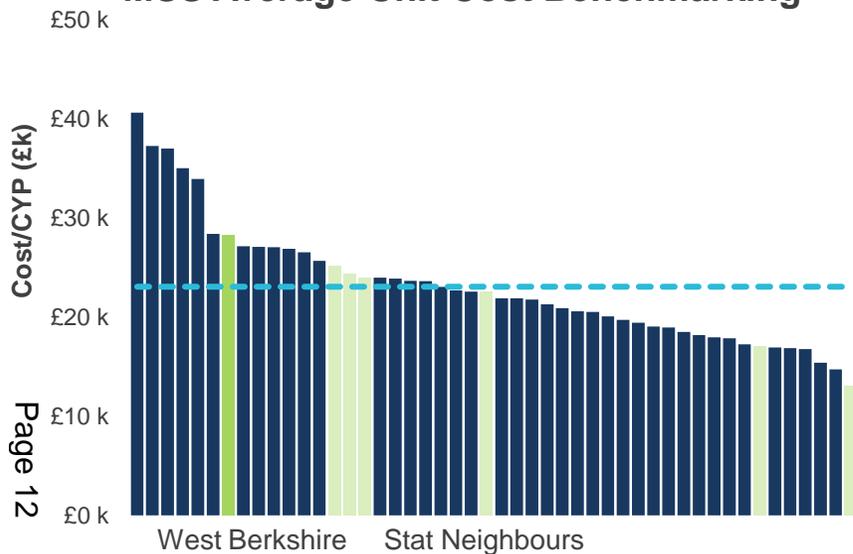
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Most prevalent themes contributing to non-ideal outcomes were gap in service offering, school's inability to meet need, and lack of Multi-Disciplinary Team response. Gap in service offering referred to gap in support by Health professionals particularly for co-occurring needs, gap in CAHMS/emotional support at transition and lack of information around services for parents/carers at schools.

- Two key areas of focus emerge:**
1. How do we ensure there is clarity of existing services on offer for schools and parents to access with a focus on emotional support? This should include key roles of health, social and LA services.
 2. How can we support our Mainstream/RP settings to best use their physical space & resources to support SEN learners?

We are looking into our unit costs across MSS & INMSS

MSS Average Unit Cost Benchmarking

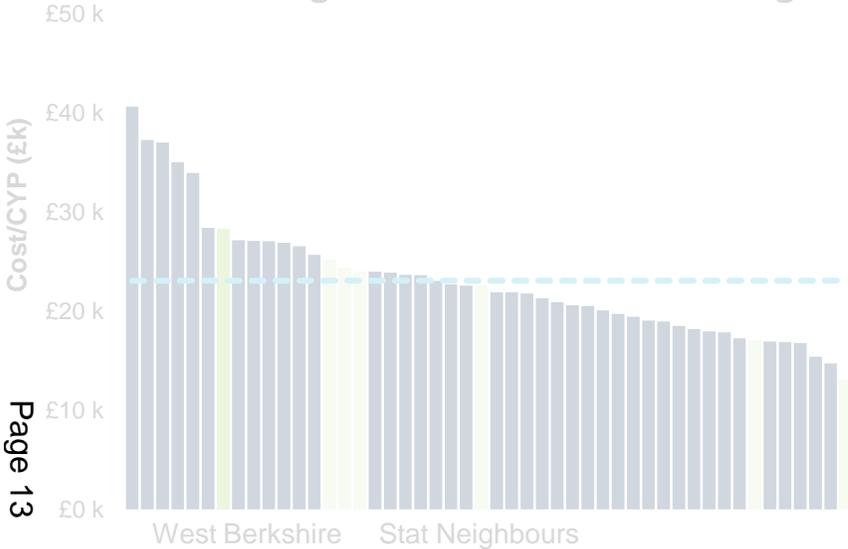


MSS Unit Cost in West Berks was almost **+10%** higher than the next statistical neighbour

The **average unit cost in both MSS and INMSS** is above the DBV LA and statistical neighbour averages in West Berkshire. In particular, MSS unit cost is larger than 80% of DBV LAs. We've also seen average growth rates of **above 5%** for both INMSS and MSS unit costs.

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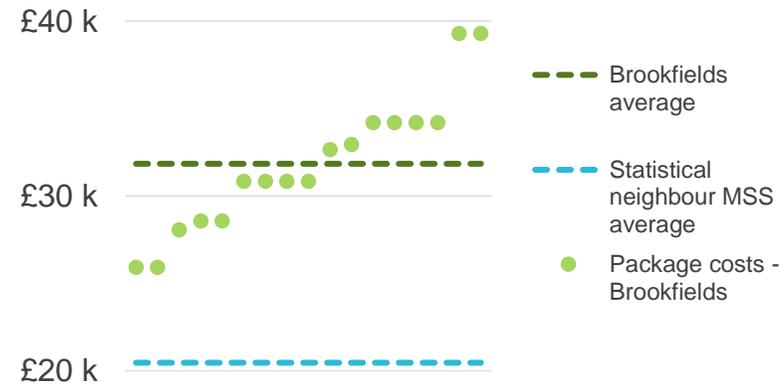
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Understanding variation across Castle & Brookfields – 2022 new starts

Brookfields has a unit cost **17% higher** than Castle.
The range of package costs for new starts at Brookfields was **£26k - £40k** (as per graph below) whereas for Castle the range was **£17k-£38k**.

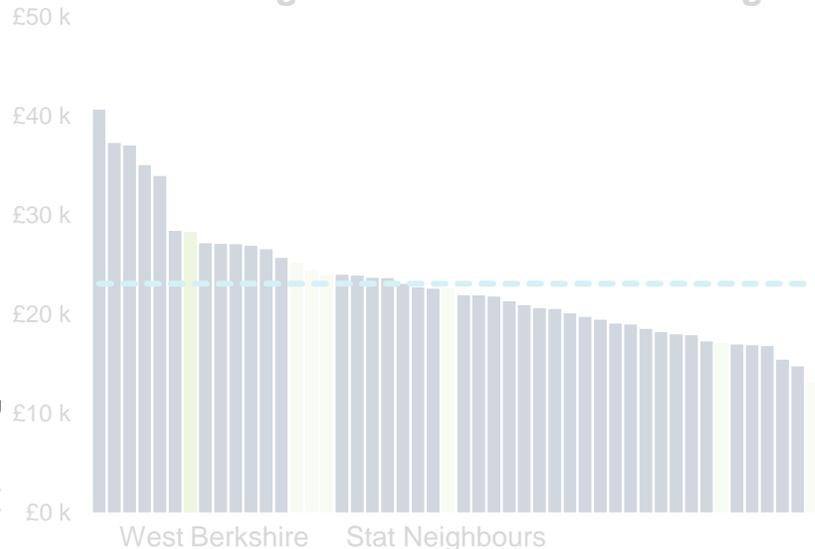


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According to the data for the 2022 new starts, Brookfields supports a higher number of students at a higher average cost than Castle. Castle has a wider range of package costs however so it will be important to understand drivers of this variation.

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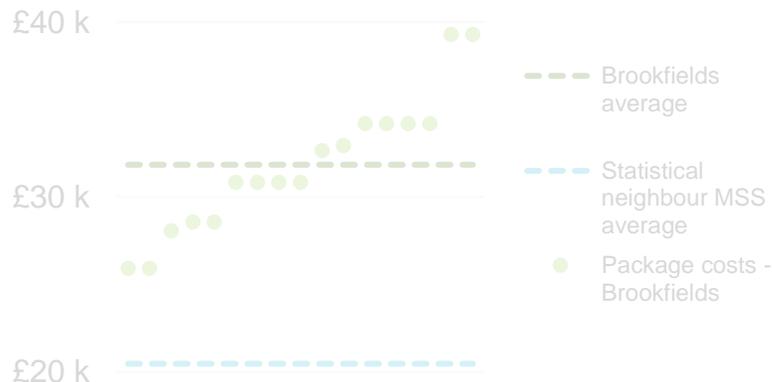
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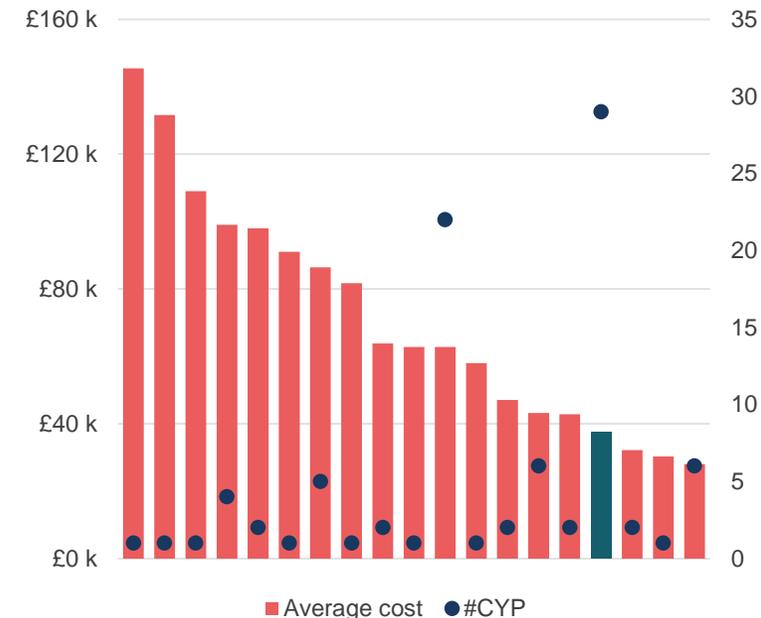
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Understanding variation across Castle & Brookfields – 2022 new starts

Brookfields has a unit cost **17% higher** than Castle. The range of package costs for new starts at Brookfields was **£26k - £40k** (as per graph below) whereas for Castle the range was **£17k-£38k**.



Unit cost by school – INMSS & i-College



The **average unit cost in both MSS and INMSS** is above the DBV LA and statistical neighbour averages in West Berkshire. In particular, MSS unit cost is larger than 80% of DBV LAs. We've also seen average growth rates of **above 5%** for both INMSS and MSS unit costs.

According to the data for the 2022 new starts, Brookfields supports a higher number of students at a higher average cost than Castle. Castle has a wider range of package costs however so it will be important to understand drivers of this variation

INMSS shows a much larger variance than MSS in unit cost terms. There are a significant number of schools that have very high-cost placements.

The evidence base from Module 2 deep dives will inform the key discussion with West Berkshire partners on the Implementation Planning Day



Schools are **struggling to meet the emotional and mental health needs** of their learners, while parents **are struggling to access the right services at the right time**. How can we ensure that there is **clear communication of existing services on offer** across health, social care and LA services, and which services are appropriate at a given time?

The **overwhelming sensory environment** and **inflexibility of school policies** in mainstream secondary schools means many SEN learners are unable to access mainstream learning. How can we **adapt the environment and utilise the existing resources more effectively** to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND?

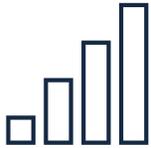
The package costs in both The Castle and Brookfields specialist schools tend to be **larger than the statistical neighbour average**. However, these costs show a much **smaller variance than the package costs in INMSS**. Understanding the drivers of these trends will help **uncover the unit cost opportunities** available.



Next steps – Module 3



The objective of Module 3 is to build findings into effective implementation planning, identifying strengths, enablers and risks.



Final Mitigated Forecasts

The final forecasting output of the DBV will overlay the mitigations and workstreams that are identified through the DBV diagnostic to produce a picture of the Stage 1 mitigated position.



Strategy Alignment

The evidence base developed throughout the DBV programme aligns with the ongoing SEND Strategy work.



Implementation Planning Day

Involving system partners in the development of workstreams will be key and we have an afternoon planned for the 16th November.



Grant Submission

Final Grant Application submission will be in early December and incorporate all of the above evidence.

Early Years Entitlement Changes

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum on 4th December 2023

Report Author: Avril Allenby

Item for: Information **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Forum with an overview of the new Early Years Entitlements and the timeline for introduction.

2. New Entitlements and related funding

- 2.1 In the government's spring budget, the Chancellor announced transformative reforms to childcare for parents, children, the economy, and women.
- 2.2 This new offer will empower parents, allowing them to progress their careers and support their families. The new entitlements will be introduced in phases:
- 2.3 From April 2024, all working parents of 2-year-olds can access 15 hours per week.
- 2.4 From September 2024, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 15 hours per week.
- 2.5 From September 2025, all working parents of children aged 9 months up to 3-years-old can access 30 hours free childcare per week.
- 2.6 Our reforms mean the government expects to spend an additional £4.1 billion by 2027 to 2028 to fund 30 hours of free childcare per week (38 weeks per year) for children over the age of nine months, a funding increase, increasing the supply of wraparound care, and wider market reforms.

3. Timeline

- 3.1 The Starting from April 2024, existing childcare support will be expanded in phases. By September 2025, most working families with children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare support.
- 3.2 The changes are being introduced gradually to make sure that providers can meet the needs of more families. This means that:
- 3.3 From April 2024, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours childcare support.
- 3.4 From September 2024, 15 hours childcare support will be extended to eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3-year-olds.
- 3.5 From September 2025, eligible working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare a week.

- 3.6 The government will invest £289m over two academic years, from September 2024, to enable schools and local areas to set up wraparound childcare provision.
- 3.7 This funding will be for schools and local authorities to **introduce or expand childcare provision** on either side of the school day and enable them to **develop flexible ways** of providing childcare and **gather evidence** of what works.
- 3.8 The funding will be allocated in the following ways:
- 3.9 Capacity funding: Funding for local authorities to use to build their internal capacity to deliver. This could include paying for a designated wraparound lead if one does not already exist.
- 3.10 Programme funding: Funding for local authorities to deliver programme objectives, including to distribute to providers to set up new provision or expand existing provision.
- 3.11 Capital funding: Funding for local authorities to support new / extended wraparound provision, including distribution to childcare providers. For capital projects only.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 West Berkshire Early Years Team have initiated a programme of work to ensure that the service, the sector, and parents are prepared for these substantial changes.
- 4.2 As the detail of the changes develops, we will ensure that the Forum is kept fully informed.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix A - West Berkshire Early Years Inclusion Support Funding (EYISF) Budget

Appendix A

West Berkshire Early Years Inclusion Support Funding (EYISF) Budget

What is EYISF?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2022-to-2023/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-of-providers-operational-guide-2022-to-2023>

5.3 Special educational needs inclusion fund (SENIF)

Local authorities are required to have SENIFs for all 3 and 4-year-olds with SEN who are taking up the free entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken. These funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN.

In West Berkshire, EYIS funding can be used to support a child's inclusion during the parental entitlement to 15 or 30 hours of free early years' education per week, for up to 38 weeks per academic year. It is for eligible two, three and four year-olds.

How it is allocated

EYISF is allocated specifically to support the inclusion of a named child. All funds must be spent on that purpose.

Applications are made on a termly basis by settings and reviewed at a panel meeting (The panel consists of the four advisory teachers from EDIT, the LSS manager, an advisory teacher from the Early Years Team, plus representatives from the EP Service and SEN Team).

EYISF is allocated within the bands shown below in line with free entitlement of 15 or 30 hours and the child's support need (frequency of intervention needed).

Band	Frequency of intervention guide	2021-22
1	Low 1 to 7 hours	200
2		500
3	Medium 8 to 20 hours	800
4		1000
5		1200
6	High 21 to 30 hours	1600
7		2000

How it has been used over the past couple of years

Previously the amount of funding allocated has reflected the number of hours a child attends the setting from their free entitlement (15 or 30 hrs) and the level of support needed e.g. low / medium / high. In this way the EYISF could support settings to provide targeted interventions for children with lower level or emerging SEND as well as a high level of support for those with more complex needs.

The Managers and SENDCos would determine how to use the funding best to support the inclusion of the child within their setting.

The funding could be used flexibly, to ensure the child's additional needs are met. For example, the funding could:

- provide a contribution toward additional staffing. An additional staff member may be recruited by the setting to work with the child, or to provide 'cover' for an experienced member of staff to provide support at given times
- be ear-marked for staff training to support staff in meeting the needs of the child
- be used to purchase equipment or resources to meet the needs of the child

Pressures on the EYISF budget

The EYISF budget is currently £90,000 per year and has not been increased for a number of years.

Two factors have had significant impact on the funds available to support settings:

1. The introduction in September 2017 of 30 hours free early years' entitlement for working parents.
2. The gradual increase in the minimum wage (this was £7.50 in 2017 and will increase again in April 2023 to £10.43).

Without a designated SEND budget, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings rely on EYISF if a child needs a high level of individual support to be included in the setting, or if they are looking to increase ratios to allow for targeted interventions. Although EYISF has always been a **contribution** towards the cost of including a child with SEND, the bandings as they stand provide a minimal contribution. For example, a child attending 30 hours requiring full adult support to be included in a setting would receive a maximum of £2000 per term, this equates to £6.66 per hour.

For the spring term 2023 there were 56 requests. Once assessed and Bands allocated the total amount of funding needed was £32,600, which far exceeded the £22,000 remaining in the budget for the year. The panel had to make some difficult decisions which resulted in only the children with an exceptional level of need (i.e. those for whom a placement would not be possible without full time support) were allocated the full funding (15 children). 24 children were given 50% of their allocated funding and the rest were given no

Early Years Entitlement Changes

funding. This amounted to £24,500 with the deficit having to be found from other budgets that sit within Learning Support.

For comparison:

In spring term 2022 there were 39 requests for funding.

In spring term 2021 there were 25 requests for funding.

What we forecast might be needed in the future?

The following table shows the last three years of funding:

	No of requests	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6	Band 7
Spring 2020*	35	8	21	6	0	0	0	0
Summer 2020	39	1	10	4	14	5	1	4
Autumn 2020	19	0	1	9	5	3	1	0
Spring 2021	25	0	2	6	10	5	2	0
£80,900 total 20/21		£200	£6,500	£15,200	£29,000	£15,600	£6,400	£8,000
Summer 2021	30	0	4	6	12	6	2	0
Autumn 2021	22	0	1	7	6	4	4	0
Spring 2022	39	1	8	6	9	8	6	1
£91,700 total 21/22		£200	£6,500	£15,200	£27,000	£21,600	£19,200	£2,000
Summer 2022	55	2	11	16	16	3	6	1
Autumn 2022	32	6	12	5	5	1	2	1
Spring 2023	38	0	12	9	9	5	3	0
£105,500 total 22/23		£1,600	£17,500	£24,000	£30,000	£10,800	£17,600	£4,000

* Bandings were higher - this was changed for summer 2020 funding onwards

- Autumn term traditionally sees the fewest requests as children transition to school, with summer term having the heaviest demand on the budget.
- The figures show a year on year increase in the number of funding requests made with a greater number of parents taking up their child's full entitlement of 15 hrs (Band 3 or 4) or up to 30 hours, (Bands 5, 6, or 7).
- We are also seeing an increase in the number of children with more complex needs being supported in mainstream PVI settings, who require a high level of individual adult support in order to be included in the setting (those children at Band 3/4 or 6/7).

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