
Delivering Better Value Programme : Update

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum on 17th June 2024

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

1. Purpose of the Report

This report is provided to Schools' Forum to provide an update on the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV) and its impact on the SEND system in West Berkshire, improving outcomes for children and young people.

2. Introduction/Background

This report will outline the progress of the DBV Programme since confirmation of funding from the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2024.

West Berkshire is required to provide a formal quarterly progress update to the DfE and this will be presented to School's Forum at the meeting in July. There will be a requirement to report on the DBV Programme and the **Deficit Mitigation Plan** for the High Needs Block.

The quarterly reporting cycle to the DfE is as follows: -

- April to June by 5th July
- July to Sept by 4th October
- October to December by 10th January
- January to March by 4th April

3. Supporting Information

3.1 Fixed term contract staff are now in place to support the delivery of the DBV Programme: -

- DBV Service Director
- DBV Programme Manager
- DBV Commissioning Consultant
- DBV Data Analyst
- Communications and Engagement

3.2. The four working Groups of the DBV Programme are meeting monthly and tasks have been instigated according to the DBV Programme Plan: -

- Parent Carers Forum have been invited to all Task Groups however, due to capacity, they will only be involved at the **SEND Strategic Improvement Board** initially. To further support communication with parents and carers, West Berkshire has invested in the **Coram Parent Champion Programme**. The Parent Champion programme will extend our ability to engage with parents and carers during the remaining months of the DBV programme supporting the Gap Analysis /SEND Local Offer and the Inclusive Practice workstreams.
Beyond the lifetime of the DBV programme, setting up a Parent Champion Programme in West Berkshire will create a network of parent carers volunteers that can be used to share and receive information and increase participation around multiple relevant service developments. For example, increasing take up of childcare entitlements for disadvantaged 2-year-olds, increasing access to early intervention services at Family Hubs for vulnerable families, increasing access and awareness of public health issues such as childhood immunisations.
- A draft **SEND Strategic Communications Plan** encompasses both, work under the DBV Programme, and the wider SEND and Inclusion Strategy under the collective strapline: “**Innovation in SEND.**” The draft Communications Strategy is likely to include an ‘Innovation in SEND’ blog / web page where we host all updates on DBV. This will be shared across multiple communication platforms to create broad reach across West Berkshire. Most importantly we can use it to engage with parents/carers and partners and later plan to create films and other blog updates about how we are progressing.
- A cross agency gap analysis is underway in relation to the Universal and Targeted Offer in West Berkshire in conjunction with health colleagues – e.g. review of the support available around Autism, pre and post diagnosis i.e. needs rather than diagnosis led access to provision.
- A **new SEND Data Set** will be embedded as an “enabler” in the 2024-2029 SEND and Inclusion Strategy to support improved reporting and data capture. This will allow for the development of a **SEND and Alternative Provision Sufficiency Strategy** to inform capacity development and financial monitoring of unit cost spend. The data team is also exploring the use of digital Portals to upload and access information online for professionals and families.
- Work on the Banding review will commence in June and schools will be contacted in relation to co-production opportunities in September, once a desk top review has been completed.
- A review of statutory decision-making processes is underway to ensure transparency, consistency, and value for money. Decision making processes to be updated, where necessary, on the Local Offer.

- The whole school Mental Health Project is being revised, due to initial delays as a consequence of recruitment issues and it is likely that it will be launched in September 2024 and may extend beyond the end of March 2025 (West Berkshire shall request that the funding allocated to this project, be carried over into the next financial year, in order to allow the project to run until July 2025 in the first instance).
- The Transition Support Programme is being developed and we will be seeking input from SENCOs, Year 7 and Early Years practitioners. In the meantime, the EDIT programme has been expanded, initially for one term, to target more vulnerable children transitioning into mainstream school.
- An audit of Schools' staff training needs is also being launched this month.

3.2 The DBV Programme is now fully aligned and incorporated into the new SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 to 2029 to ensure the overarching delivery of "Innovation in SEND" programme in West Berkshire. This is a transformational piece of work which will have a significant legacy consequence for future years.

4. Options for Consideration

4.1 There are risks to the programme and these need to be flagged as they emerge.

- SEND Local Area Inspection Preparation: Impacting on staff capacity to prioritise work in DBV Programme, potentially delaying implementation-**Mitigation:** DBV Programme is closely monitored, and additional capacity created through fixed term contract staff.
- Academisation of Special School in area: Impact on anticipated capacity development of additional places in specialist provision over the next 3 years. Sixteen additional Reception and Key Stage 3 placements will be required, if INMSS placements are used instead then this will have a significant impact on the Deficit Management Plan. **Mitigation:** Ensuring Sufficiency Task Group prioritising actions in capacity development in mainstream and alternative sites.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The DBV Programme is proceeding at pace and is currently in line with the delivery schedule, but the anticipated SEND Local Area inspection will impact on delivery time during the inspection due to staff capacity. In addition, it may impact on delivery of actions post inspection if additional priorities are highlighted by the inspection team.