

Nottingham City Council

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held remotely and livestreamed on YouTube on 16 July 2024 from 1.50 pm - 2.45 pm

Membership

Kerrie Fox	-	HHELC (PRUs)
David Tungate	-	Secondary Academies
Kerrie Henton	-	AP Academies and Free Schools
Debbie Simon	-	Early Years PVI
Judith Kemplay)	
✓ Terry Smith)	Maintained Primary Head Teachers
✓ Alison Tones)	
✓ Patricia Lewis	-	Maintained Special Schools
Laura Patel	-	The Nottingham Nursery
✓ Meeta Dave)	
Tim Jeffs)	Primary Academies
Rob Perkins)	
✓ Jill Wilkinson)	
✓ Andy Smith)	
Andy Gilbert)	Secondary Academies
Emma Howard)	
✓ Sandra Stapleton)	
Phil Willott	-	Special Academies
✓ Sheena Wheatley	-	Trade Unions
Adam Beazeley	-	14-19 Education

✓ indicates present at the meeting

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Neil Brettell	-	Special Educational Needs Team Manager
Jennifer Hardy	-	Interim Head of Access to Learning
Mark Leavesley	-	Governance Officer / Clerk to the Forum
Donna Munday	-	High Needs Senior Commercial Business Partner
Dr Maddi Popoola	-	Mental Health Support Team Service Manager
Susan Woodland	-	Interim DSG Senior Commercial Business Partner

31 Chair

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, Alison Tones (Maintained Primary Headteacher representative) agreed to Chair the meeting.

32 Apologies for absence

Kerrie Fox
Andy Gilbert
Kerrie Henton
Judith Kemplay
Debbie Simon
David Tungate
Phil Willott

33 Declarations of interests

None at the meeting.

However, prior to the meeting, Kerrie Fox (Chair and HHELC representative) had declared an interest, insofar as her establishment was partly the subject of the only substantive item (item 5, minute 36, 'Education for children unable to attend school for health reasons') and as she would need to leave the meeting prior to consideration of the item, sent her apologies for the meeting.

34 Minutes

The Forum agreed the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 January 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair presiding at the meeting.

35 Membership

- (1) the appointment of Jill Wilkinson (a Governor at Rosslyn Park Academy) as a Primary Academy representative was noted;
- (2) Terry Smith (a Maintained Primary representative) informed members that this would be his last meeting due to his retirement at the end of term.

The Chair and members thanked him for his attendance and contribution to the Forum over the years.

36 Education for children unable to attend school for health reasons

Jennifer Hardy (Interim Head of Access to Learning), Maddi Popoola (Mental Health Support Team Service Manager) and Donna Munday (High Needs Senior Commercial Business Partner), presented the report, which detailed the following:

- a) Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 has always required Local Authorities to make provision for children who are unable to attend school due to illness, permanent exclusion or other reason. However, the Department for Education (DfE), has issued revised guidance for schools, settings and Local Authorities about how to support children unable to attend school for health reasons;
- b) the revised guidance supports the updated 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidance, which becomes statutory in August 2024;

- c) in order to meet the growing demand for support for children with health needs, as well as allowing the Council to meet this statutory duty, a proposal for a policy, a new team and a new process has been developed, and is outlined in more detail in the report;
- d) despite the significant increase in workload, demand and resources that both new pieces of guidance will create for schools, settings and the Local Authority, the DfE are not allocating any additional funding for this work;
- e) instead, the guidance for supporting children unable to attend school for health reasons refers to the ongoing expectation that alternative provision for children with medical needs is funded by local authorities' high-needs budgets, which is a legitimate use of high-needs funding;
- f) a new team will be established in the existing Mental Health Support Team to support young people not attending school for mental health reasons. This team will comprise of 4x FTE Child Welfare Practitioners, 4x FTE Education Mental Health Practitioners, 1x FTE Clinical Supervisor and 1x FTE Team Manager, at a cost of £434,156. It is estimated this team could support approximately 240 children at a time;
- g) new roles would need to be established in the Council to oversee this process - an Education Panel Programme Manager, a Co-ordinator, and two Education Welfare type roles to support with safeguarding and oversight of the children open to this service, at a cost of £183,267;
- h) if children are unable to access education via their home school, the Local Authority may put an education provision in place. This budget (of £450,000) could be used for online learning, to fund additional Teaching Assistants at HHELC under their Outreach Programme, or to purchase AV1 Bots to allow children to access a remote education. Funding not spent in the 2024/25 academic year would be returned to the High-needs budget;
- i) it is proposed to fund this model for 12 months initially, with a view to bringing an update report to Schools Forum in 2025 for review;
- j) while the costs outlined in this paper are significant, they represent an investment in a model that can bring significant change for children and their families, and support schools to re-engage young people;
- k) the DfE guidance driving this proposal is not specific about what provision local authorities should provide for children with mental health issues, and a scaled down version of this package could be considered. However, at this time it is felt this whole package would best meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

Resolved, following consideration and discussion of the report at the meeting, to approve spend of up to £1,067,423 for the 2024/25 academic year to support the Council's response to the amended DfE guidance, the cost of which be funded from the DSG High Needs Block.

37 Dates of future meetings

Schools Forum - 16.07.24

It was agreed to meet remotely via Zoom at 1.45pm on the following Tuesdays during the 2024/25 academic year:

2024

08 October

03 December

2025

21 January

29 April

24 June