

## Haringey Schools Forum Minutes

6 February 2025 AT 16:00 HRS AT HEP:Inderwick Road, Crouch End N8 9JF

School Members		
Headteachers		
Special (1)	Martin Doyle (Riverside)	
Nursery Schools (1)	(A)Sian McDermott (Rowland Hill)	
Primary (7)	Mary Gardiner (West Green)	Kate Stevens (St Aidan VC)
	Robert Lane (Headteacher: Welbourne) substitute for Hina Shah (Earlsmead)	Paul Murphy (Lancasterian)
	(A)Ian Scotchbrook (South Haringay)	(A)Linda Sarr (Risley Avenue)
	Bola Soneye-Thomas (Rokesly Junior School)	
Secondary (2)	Jo Davey (Fortismere)	Vacancy
Primary Academy (1)	(A)Luke Renwick (Brook House) long term substitute for Simon Knowles (LDBS Academies Trust)	
Secondary Academies (3)	(A)Michael McKenzie (Alexandra Park)	(A)Angela Wallace (Mulberry Woodside Academy)
	Vacancy	
Alternative Provision (1)	(A)Gerry Robinson (Executive Headteacher HLP)	
Governors		
Special (1)	Phil Di Leo (The Vale)	
Nursery School (1)	Melian Mansfield (Pembury)	
Primary Maintained (7)	Vacancy	Dan Salem (Stroud Green Primary)
	Oliver Simms (Alexandra Primary)	
	Helen Froggatt (St Aidan's VC) P	(A)Jenny Thomas (Lordship Lane)
	Caroline Schloss (Alexandra Primary)	
Secondary Maintained (3)	(A)Laurence Penn (Highgate Wood)	Vacancy
	Sylvia Dobie (Park View)	
Primary Academy (1)	Vacancy	
Secondary Academies (3)	(A)Andrea Henry (Greig City Academy)	Vacancy
	Vacancy	
Alternative Provision (1)	Vacancy	
Non-School Members		
Non-Executive Councillor	Cllr Ibrahim Ali	
Trade Union Representative	(A)Paul Rennn	
Professional Association Representative	(A)Efe Kurtluoglu substitution for Ed Harlow	
Faith Schools	(A)Geraldine Gallagher	
CCCG Representative	(A)Christine Bianchin	

<b>Early Years Providers</b>	Susan Tudor-Hart
<b>Independent member</b>	Will Wawn [Chair]
<b>Observers</b>	
None	
<b>Cabinet Member for CYPS</b>	
(A)Cllr Zena Brabazon	
<b>Also Attending</b>	
Director of Children's Services	(A)Ann Graham
Assistant Director, Schools & Learning	Jane Edwards
Assistant Director, Commissioning & Programmes	(A)Caroline Brain
Assistant Director, Early Help, Prevention & SEND	Jackie Difolco
Head of Schools Finance	Neil Sinclair
Senior Finance Manager - Schools	Muhammad Ali
Principal Accountant	Lewis Anthony
Principal advisor for Early Years	Nick Hewlett
Chief Executive HEP	James Page
Lead for Governor Services (HEP)	Anne Etchells
Clerk (HEP)	Corinne David

(A) Absent

## 1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. APOLOGIES, SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, OBSERVERS AND FORUM MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

- 2.1 Apologies for Absence were received and noted from:  
 Sian McDermott (Headteacher: Rowland Hill)  
 Hina Shah (Headteacher: Earlsmead)  
 Ian Scotchbrook (Headteacher: South Harringay)  
 Linda Sarr (Headteacher: Risley Avenue)  
 Laurence Penn (Governor: Highgate Wood)  
 Cllr Zena Brabazon  
 Anne Graham (Director of Children's Services)  
 Caroline Brain (Assistant Director, Commissioning & Programmes)
- 2.2 Robert Lane (Headteacher: Welbourne) was welcomed as a substitute member to the meeting.
- 2.3 Lewis Anthony was welcomed as Principal Accountant.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 No declaration of interests was made in respect of any of the agenda items.

## 4. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 The minutes of the Schools Forum meeting held on 16 January 2025 were **AGREED** and **RATIFIED** as a correct record of the meeting; subject to the following clarification:
- Item 4.2.7: The 2024/25 split site nursery funding of £60k would be received in the February 2025 cash flow.
  - Item 5.1.1: A primary Headteacher, whose school also had a nursery, from Schools Forum membership was sought to join the Early Years Working Party.

## 4.2 Matters arising

### 4.2.1 Item 4.2.1 Vacancies on the School's Forum membership

a) All members to continue recruitment through all avenues to appoint to vacant positions.

b) Will Wawn to follow up with Secondary Academies to try and recruit to vacancies.

c) For each block that had vacancies, elections to take place to select members to the Forum.

d) HEP to continue to email all Governors regarding Governor vacancies on Schools Forum. Governor Forum members to make request for members at relevant Chairs and Governor meetings.

All actions were noted as ongoing actions.

### 4.2.2 Item 4.2.2 Vice Chair Election

The Chair informed Schools Forum that no one had been in contact and expressed an interest in becoming Vice -Chair.

Action to be undertaken at the July meeting.

### 4.2.3 Item 8.4 Jackie Difolco informed Schools Forum that whilst it was widely known that there is insufficient funding for children with SEND support and EHCPs, there had been discussions with Headteachers regarding the actual cost of supporting pupils and looking at best practice and learning that could be shared. The Headteacher of Muswell Hill Primary school is undertaking a piece of work supported by the LA to inform this. Also, further information will be received from the secondary Headteachers. Officers noted that the spreadsheet sent to schools re: numbers of children with SEND support and EHCPs is informed by data provided by schools for the termly CENSUS returns.

Action was closed.

### 4.2.4 Item 11.1 To receive the Schools in Financial Difficulty Update' See item 9.

## **5. UPDATE FROM WORKING PARTIES**

5.1 No wider updates were received from the Early Years Block Working Party. Noted that the majority of work undertaken since the last meeting was in connection with item 7.

5.2 No update was received from High Needs Block Working Party.

5.3 No update was received from the Dedicated School Block Working Party

## **6. CENTRAL SCHOOLS SERVICES BLOCK FUNDING 25/26**

6.1 Lewis Anthony provided an overview of the paper titled 'Dedicated School Grant (DSG) 2025/26 and Central Schools Services (CSSB) Block Funding'.

6.2 The CSSB continues to have two elements of funding: a) Ongoing responsibilities, which funds all local authorities (LA) for central functions to deliver central functions to all pupils in maintained schools and academies which has been reduced by 2.5% each year; b) Historic commitments of which Haringey has none.

- 6.3 In 2025-26, the CSSB allocation was increased due to the rolling in of grants, which were provided separately in 2024-25 in respect of: (i) increased copyright licences costs; and (ii) centrally employed teachers, through the teachers' pension employment contribution grant (TPECG) and the core schools budget grant (CSBG).
- 6.4 The following allocations were noted, totalling £2.703m:
- a) Education Service Grant: £550k.
  - b) Schools Standards: £273k.
  - c) Looked After Children Placements: £454k.
  - d) Early Help: £350k.
  - e) Service of Schools' Forum: £10k.
  - f) Admissions: £318k.
  - g) Governor Support: £130k.
  - h) Music & Performing Arts: £168k.
  - i) Support Costs: £192k.
  - j) Copyrights Licences: £220k.
  - k) Rolling in finding: £102k.
- 6.5 Members commended those services that have received reduced in funding; but continue to deliver high quality services.

## **7. EARLY YEARS BLOCK 24/25 UPDATE & 25/26 FUNDING STRATEGY**

- 7.1 Nick Hewlett provided an overview of the paper titled 'Early Years Block 2024-25 update and budget setting 2025 26'.
- 7.2 The service was currently forecasting an underspend of £530k which will go into reserves. The Early Years Block indicative allocations for 2025/26 reports an increase of 24%, £7.5m due to additional funding for 2-year-old working families receiving additional support and under 2's expansion of the 30-hour entitlement which commences in September 2025. Some new funding initiatives were also received in September.
- 7.3 Noted that the centrally retained funding level had reduced from 5% to 4%. An overview of the how the centrally retained funding spending allocations was provided totalling £1.497m. Noted that the amount within contingency had increased; however there had not been a significant call on the funds during the previous year.
- 7.4 Nick Hewlett informed members that there were 9 to 10 schools that have applied for the Nursery 2-year-old capital grant, demonstrating that funding for 2-year-olds has improved allowing provision to be financially viable. Members suggested that Officers collect case studies of schools that are taking 2-year-olds and the positive impact the nursery provision has on the overall school setting.
- 7.5 Members discussed how the payment for deprivation was determined. Noted that the IDACI figures were out of date. EYFS providers noted that settings found it challenging to get parents to claim pupil premium; noting that families had to provide their National Insurance number to allow settings to check eligibility. It was not mandatory for parents to provide this information and there was a reluctance to declare eligibility from some communities. Headteachers' noted that as part of family indication packs National Insurance numbers were sought as part of the paper work.
- 7.6 As part of the Safety Valve programme, it had been agreed that the early years block will make a contribution year on year to the high needs block to passport funding back to the HNB. The 2025/2026 contribution is based on the total cost of £360,000 apportioned against each of the Early Years entitlements. This supports the wider early years work linked to Safety Valve. As an example, the EYs inclusion fund which provides funding for young children with emerging needs until the end of year 1 without the need for an EHCP. Part of the EY fund supports easier access to

Speech and Language for EYFS children. Those children accessing the inclusion funds will have light touch check ins to establish if they need an EHCP or whether their needs can be met through the graduated response. The LA is monitoring the uptake and impact of the Early Years Inclusion Fund.

- 7.7 EY members noted that there was no minimum funding guarantee; similar to school settings. The top slicing for SEND creates issues for future financial planning. Officers reassured settings that where possible the LA tried to create financial stability which meant the base rate wouldn't be affected and decline. Further noted funding is affected by pupil numbers; with that with increasing children numbers results in an increased funding envelope.

- 7.8 *Q: Will there be more hours that are funded?*

A: The rates have increased slightly; but the hours available has also increased. Noted that the data is indicative as it's difficult to know how many children are in the system or families will take up the provision. Officers have to go by GP data. Currently around the take up rate is around 80% to 85%.

- 7.9 *Q: Are there different rates for take up?*

A: Yes; but officers can only go by how many codes have been validated. The current take up rate for three and four year olds is at 86%; this is the highest level for Haringey.

- 7.10 *Q: How does Haringey compare to neighbours?*

A: Haringey is below national take up rates which is at 90%; however, there is a large number of certain communities like Orthodox Jewish that seek provision out of the borough. There are also some communities that don't want to take up childcare.

- 7.11 The Chair drew member towards a vote on the recommendations detailed within the paper.

- 7.11.1 Recommendation 1: It is the recommendation of the Early Years Working Group that the hourly rate paid for the delivery of the 2-year-old families receiving additional support entitlement is £9.72 per hour.

**RECOMMENDATION 1 WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

- 7.11.2 Recommendation 2: It is the recommendation of the Early Years Working Group that the hourly rate paid for the delivery of the 2-year-old working families entitlement is £9.72 per hour.

**RECOMMENDATION 2 WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

- 7.11.3 Recommendation 3: It is the recommendation of the Early Years Working Group that the hourly rate paid for the delivery of the under 2's entitlement is £13.40 per hour

**RECOMMENDATION 3 WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

- 7.11.4 Recommendation 4: It is the recommendation of the Early Years Working Group that the hourly rate paid for the delivery of the 3 and 4-year-old free entitlement, is Option 2D. Base Rate: £6.18 per hour. Deprivation Rate: £0.30 per hour for those pupils eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium Hourly Rate totalling £6.48 per hour.

**RECOMMENDATION 4 WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

**8. SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

- 8.1 Jackie Difolco provided a summary of the current progress with the Safety Valve Projects, noting that a power point presentation had been circulated prior to the

meeting. Ten out of 18 projects are closed and now business as usual and being tracked within the programme regarding their impact.

## 8.2 Demand Management Projects

8.2.1 *Project A.1 Speech, Language and Communication.* The service continues to provide training and support to primary schools for the delivery of the SLCN Pathway. Data set now in place measuring impact of SLCN pathway delivery and evidencing good impact with 80% improvement in SLCN needs and a 50% reduction in referrals to specialist therapies compared with the previous year. Review of 2023/24 and next steps being arranged working with the Safety Valve Steering Group.

8.2.2 *Project A.4 Annual Reviews.* Growth funding from Council's revenue fund has agreed (£1m) for further Educational Psychologists and EHC Co-ordinator's (increase by 5 officers) which will positively impact quality and compliance of EHCP's; which is currently at 60%. Ninety percent of new plans are completed within 16 to 20 weeks.

8.2.3 *Project A.5 SEND Supported Internships.* There are 44 young people who are currently on a supported internship. A specialist role (NEET Co-ordinator) is now in post to support both young people and employers with this programme. Review of pre supported internship to see if it can include post 19. The service is expanding the number of disability confident employers who can offer placements.

## 8.3 Commissioning/Capital Projects

The following was noted by members:

- Alexandra Primary provision for children with SEMH (10 places). Building work is due to start in the Easter holidays and on track to be open for September 25.
- Earlsmead Primary provision for autistic children (15 places). The Resource Provision has opened with a phasing of the placements with three children attending.
- The Brook Primary Provision for autistic children with complex needs is on track to be open for September 25.
- Park View (St Mary' site) secondary provision for children with SEMH (34 places) is on track to be opened for September 26.
- Riverside Secondary and Post 16 provision for autistic children with complex needs (15 places) has been opened and is full.
- Work is in progress with Fortismere Secondary for provision for autistic children to open in September 2026.
- Phase two is underway to create an additional 40 places. The service is being strategic in the employment of the annual capital budget to create the addition places.

8.4 Currently Haringey has 2,979 active EHCPs which is 121 EHCP over the Safety Valve target. The LA undertook an annual review to ensure that those children that required an EHCP received one. Overall, the outcome showed that decision making was robust and appropriate.

8.5 The budget for 24-25 was £55.6m. The Safety Valve target was not to exceed this by £2.8m. The LA rolled over £300k from 23-24 resulting in an overspend target of £2.5m. The current projection stood at £2.6m and on track to meet the target which will mean the LA can draw down £3m this year to reduce the accumulative deficit to £10.7m (was £21m at start of programme).

8.6 *Q: How does 60% of the annual reviews completed within time frame compare to other neighbours?*

A: The national rate of completion is approx. 50%. The largest cohort impacted is post 16. Noted that the responsibility of an annual review is that of the education provider (schools). EHC Co-ordinators only attend annual reviews if there is a risk of a placement breakdown as there are only 17 case officers for 3,000 plans and they

do not have a relationship with the children. Those children approaching a phase transfer (primary to secondary; secondary to post 16) completion is prioritised and above 90%. For completion and issuing of new EHCP Haringey is significantly above national average of 55%, Haringey is 90%. The EHC Co-ordinators team will be strengthened: with an officer providing triage, additional support in the primary team and a focus on post 16.

- 8.7 Members provided their experiences/ challenges of trying to engage with Health services to complete EHCP reviews and support plans.

**ACTION**      a) Schools to provide their experiences of engaging with Health for the EHCP review process to Jackie Difolco.  
b) Jackie Difolco to discuss with Health colleagues the challenges schools have experienced to engage with different services.

- 8.8 A Member enquire about representation on the Safety Value Programme Board from the EYs sector.

**ACTION**      Jackie Difolco to arrange for Early Years representation on the SV steering group.

- 8.9 Members acknowledged the rapid progress within the Safety Valve and commended the LA.

- 8.10 Jackie Difolco informed members that Mary Jarrett's replacement was Karen Flanagan and will be joining Haringey on 24 March 2025.

## **9 SCHOOLS IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY 25/26 DE-DELEGATION PROPOSAL**

- 9.1 Neil Sinclair requested a deferment of the Schools in Financial Difficulty paper to the March Schools Forum paper. Noted that the paper will be shared with members and Governors. Members sought an acknowledgement within the paper that schools were spending significant resources on supporting EHCP which had an impacted on overall budgets.

**ACTION**      LA to circulate updated paper to schools for comment by end of next week.

**AGREED for Schools Forum to receive the schools in financial difficulty paper at the March meeting.**

## **10 PROPOSED MEETING DATES FOR 2025**

Dates for the remainder of the meetings for the current academic year were noted as:

- Thursday 13 March 2025 at 4pm – Via TEAMs.
- Thursday 3 July 2024 at 4pm

- 10.1 Agenda items for the March meeting

- Schools in Financial Difficulty
- Possible Terms of Reference for the High needs block.
- Safety Valve Update

- 10.2 The discussion paper on notional SEND to be received at the July meeting.

## **11 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

- 11.1 Muhammad Ali informed members that the 0.5% disapplication block transfer and the EWS transfer had been approved by the DfE.

The Chair closed the meeting at 6pm.

## SUMMARY OF AGREED ACTIONS

Item	Action	Lead
4.2.1	<u>Vacancies on the School's Forum membership</u> a) All members to continue recruitment through all avenues to appoint to vacant positions.  b) Will Wawn to follow up with Secondary Academies to try and recruit to vacancies.  c) For each block that had vacancies, elections to take place to select members to the Forum.  d) HEP to continue to email all Governors regarding Governor vacancies on Schools Forum. Governor Forum members to make request for members at relevant Chairs and Governor meetings.	All  WW  All  HEP
4.2.2	<u>Vice Chair Election</u> Election of Vice -Chair to be undertaken at the July meeting.	Clerk/WW
8.7	<u>Engagement of Health Services in supporting EHCP</u> a) Schools to provide their experiences of engaging with Health for the EHCP review process to Jackie Difolco.  b) Jackie Difolco to discuss with Health colleagues the challenges schools have experienced to engage with different services.	Headteachers  JD
8.8	<u>Representation on the Safety Value Programme Board</u> Jackie Difolco to arrange for early years representation on the Safety Valve Steering Group.	JD
9.1	<u>Schools in Financial Difficulty paper</u> LA to circulate updated paper to schools for comment by end of next week.	NS/MA