

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20th January 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Children's Services

PORTFOLIO: Children and Young People

SUBJECT: A report on the work to date on DBV and impact

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To assure the board of the progress today against the targets set out in the DBV Grant – Delivering Better Values covering the period of the third quarter October 24 - January 25 for the Delivering Better Value (DBV) project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a Department for Education programme working to identify and implement local opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND across 54 LAs, and aid local systems (alongside existing local and other DfE programmes) in their objective of achieving financial sustainability. Halton was identified as eligible to apply for DBV grant funding and subsequently a grant application was submitted on the 20th December 2023. Halton requested £1m of grant funding, primarily to build resilience across all educational systems to support and include learners with Social, Emotional Mental Health Needs. The initiatives outlined in our bid are designed to allow schools and settings to support SEND children effectively, without necessarily having to request an Education Health and Care assessment, alleviating the demand for specialist placements, and reducing both the risk of out of borough placement and permanent exclusions. We were notified in March that our bid was successful and that we had been awarded the full £1m grant. This additional resource presents a significant opportunity to positively transform inclusive practices across Halton.

- 3.2 Workstream 1- Behaviour Support- Thrive – Ahead (implementation phase) In summary to date 75% of schools have engaged regarding the project with 59% of schools having booked some or all of their Thrive training. All the closed Halton LP courses are due to finish in Nov / Dec. any outstanding school will now be booked onto open courses by Thrive. We have rolled out Thrive Awareness training to 134 professionals who will support Thrive. Our EYFS Team have now completed their training have started to be deployed to support settings. One example of this is an action from TATS – Team around the school. *Feedback from Thrive Awareness Training - Mary Murphy who attended the session, “That was really helpful and sounds like a really good approach.” Others in the session verbally said it had been helpful.*
- 3.3 Workstream 1- Behaviour Support - Team teach – Ahead (implementation phase) We are currently ahead in our roll out of Team Teach. All our Resource Bases have now been trained as well as a number of mainstream settings- 183 members of school staff have had Level 1 training and 33 Level 2. We also have more settings booked in for Spring 25. Our EP service (Educational Psychologist) are now trained This will give us the opportunity to be sustainable after DBV has finished. We had previously planned to give the trainers training to schools (via expression of interest previously). We also feel we will be able to suggest and deliver bespoke training for settings if the need arises from this change in approach. We had a workshop for 88 staff in November from Team Teach. This was designed to support schools who have only a few members of staff that need training. *Feedback on TEAM Teach: Very informative. Lots of useful information and tips to use in various environments and situations. Very informative, time for practical activities and discussion.*
- 3.4 Workstream 1- Behaviour Support Lead Practitioner – On Track (implementation phase) Team around the School Model (TATS) continues to have impact. This is in the form of a weekly professional meeting in which pupils at risk of exclusion are identified both by settings and other Halton LA data sets. The meeting is made up of EP, EWO, Specialist Teachers, Mental Health, Nursing, Locality Teams as well as Police, Youth Justice and Social Worker if applicable to the child. The newly appointed data analyst team members use the data to drive the meetings held. *Feedback from TATS meeting: Karl Landrum St Gerard’s Catholic Primary and Nursery School – “Thank you for the support and guidance that you all gave at TATs, it is helping the pupil, family and our own staff.*
- 3.5 Worksteeam 1-Behaviour Support EBSNA Pathway – On Track EWO and EP Services are now engaged to work with EBSNA children and families. This is a joint approach from both SASOs (School Attendance Support Officers) and Assistant EPs. Children

have been identified by a S19 or Education Inclusion Panel to consider school referrals. This panel and governance has been agreed. With our data analyst now in post we are using the Vulnerable Learners groups (meets 6 weekly) to identify and monitor this cohort and report impact. Impact case studies are currently being undertaken.

- 3.6 Workstream 1- Behaviour Support HD Unit – Co-Design Slightly behind should be pilot stage Secondary schools have been identified and sighted on the proposed SLA. Delivering Better Value (DBV), High Dependency (HD) Unit Pilot executive report has been written and in process of being signed off. The proposal is to have the Units up and running in Spring 2025.
- 3.7 Workstream 2 - The deliberate delay in Q1 and Q2 has now been caught up. We have now moved on at pace to ensure the time is made up to ensure implementation, but at the same time are sensitive to the needs of our stakeholders.
- 3.8 Workstream 2- Inclusion Quality Mark – on track The IQM (Inclusion Quality Mark), the launch took place in September at our DBV 'Learning Lunch' for Resource base settings. IQM met with all setting taking part in November to officially launch in with their team. This was well received. Schools will now be supported in a cluster by IQM to work through the award. One of our resource bases is already an IQM Assessor Centre and will support all involved. Feedback – N Abel SENDCO The Brow – following IQM Launch. *It was useful for Sarah to outline the programme timeline and for us to be given time within the session to review the SER. It was also insightful to listen to Richard talk about the team's IQM work at Woodside and to know that there are schools within the community to seek further support from with the IQM.*
- 3.9 Workstream 2 Inclusion Toolkit/ SA Framework – On track This links to Workstream 1 - Team around the School Model (TATS) which is now in place. To support the weekly meetings, a range of documents including a toolkit is being procured. This is an open access bank of resources that will support schools. It also includes a directory of local service which can be accessed and contacts for lead practioners in each field. This strand also feeds into the new digital Local Offer which is being created as part of PAP 2 on the SEND Area Action Plan for Halton. The launch of a new SEN Inclusion Matter Newsletter in September (4 weekly) has developed the lines of communication between all professionals and schools. DBV is also supporting the Local Offer becoming digital, again all stakeholders are involved in the development.
- 3.10 Work has also been carried out this quarter to ensure Provision and Placement panel is more robust in ensuring that INMASS in the last resort for our EHCP children and ensure we reduce the spending

from our High Need Block. This has involved the implementations of new paperwork, terms of reference of the group etc.... to provide more support and challenge for each decision made.

- 3.11 Workstream 2 Inclusion Lead Practitioner - On track This has been closely linked to the training of Halton Staff in both Thrive Approach and the ability for our EP service to offer TEAM Teach training. The Specialist Teacher Service are leading of the inclusive practice for each of their specialist areas. Our Resource Bases are supporting mainstream settings with inclusive practices. This was co-designed and a framework set at our DBV 'Learning Lunch' event in September. We have also held our first NASEN SEND Conference in November attended by 97 delegates from 86% of our school settings and 21 delegates to a bolt of session for EYFS. This was designed to link up all that has been offered so far by the DBV and also made links to the SEND Area Action Plan.
- 3.12 Workstream 2 Headteacher Coach and Influence Model - On track Our Principal EP (Education Psychologist) has now rolled this out. The outcome has been a hybrid bespoke approach in the form of both online and face to face – both group and one to one. We are utilising the existing cluster groups in the first instance to support Headteachers, followed by both in person and online meetings. This has been seen a real need by Headteachers. Further work for other SEND and SLT members are ongoing use other professionals in the system.
- 3.13 The next step is to explore an invest to save measure by establishing two High Dependency (HD) Pilot Units within secondary settings, initially for 1 year, explored by the Delivering Better Value (DBV) grant and funded by High Needs Block.
- 3.14 The pilot is to explore a possible cost saving measure to reduce out of borough placements as a result of permanent exclusions. If successful, this will result in the possible rollout of further HD Units through the Resource Base process, to support schools to reduce permanent exclusions.
- 3.15 High Needs Block spend has grown 46% in Halton since Financial Year ending 2020, with 78% of all spend coming from Maintained Special Schools (MSS), Independent and Non-maintained special schools (INMSS) and Mainstream settings.
- 3.16 Halton are supporting a higher proportion of their caseload in specialist provision than their statistical neighbours, particularly in INMSS, where 9% of Halton's EHCPs are supported compared to the national average of 5%.
- 3.17 Expressions of interest were received by Blessed Carlo Acutis and Sandymoor Ormiston Academy after presentations were given by

Charotte Finch (Acting Director SEND and Inclusion) at Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers meetings on two occasions. This was a borough wide pilot offer.

3.18 Due diligence checks were carried out by the SEND teams and the DBV (Delivering Better Value) lead Mike Stapleton-Chambers. Both schools have also taken an active part in previous reduction of permanent exclusion projects including Team around the School.

3.19 Children identified for this pilot unit, will be children at high risk of exclusion or already subject to an exclusion within the school population.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The outcomes will work towards the objectives within the Children and Young People Strategy 2024-27.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The acceptance of the report by the Department of Education (DfE) will release the final £250,000 funding for the project. In total this will conclude the £1,000,000 grant funding.

5.2 Grant funding is on track and within budget.

5.3 The establishing two High Dependency (HD) Pilot Units is an investment to save project. The actual spend will come from the High Needs Block as an investment to save pilot.

5.4 The full costs will be calculated via coproduction with the host setting through the pilot and may be subject to change. Guidance will be given by Naheem Shafiq, Principal Finance Officer, who was part of the initial DfE (Department of Education) bid for the DBV (Delivering Better Value) grant. Early discussion/scoping with schools indicates that place funding should be between 100k pa- 120k pa, to support 4 young people. This will represent an investment, in order to save approximately £45k per child in each Unit, by maintaining the child in their local school, and avoiding the additional cost of INMSS and associated transport.

5.5 Of the 69 permanently excluded pupils in 23/24, 13 received an EHCP after the date of permanent exclusion. Only one was undergoing statutory assessment at the time of permanent exclusion.

5.6 INMSS latest data shows that the average cost of a placement is £63,995.00 plus transportation costs. In the year 23/24, 6 pupils were placed in these settings.

- 5.7 Of the 69 permanently excluded 36 are still at 'The Bridge' at a cost of £23,027 These costs are currently under review. Historically, these children will continue at 'The Bridge' for a number of years. Only 19 went back into mainstream schools, 8 are still currently at the Home tuition centre this setting is also under review.
- 5.8 DBV (Delivering Better Value) funding will be used to develop the systems, training and resources underpinning the units and will not require recurrent funding. As above, the implementation of these pilots must take into account other improvement programmes, to maximise the opportunity for success. All momentum.
- 5.9 If successful, this 1 year pilot will require consultation and change statutorily, know as a 'Significant Change' notice. If these provisions move toward more formalised/recognised SEMH RBs/Units. This has been agreed with legal services (Manwar Hussain) as an appropriate approach.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

The work in schools carried out as part of Delivering Better Value (DBV) project is informed by Halton's Children and Young Peoples Plan and includes all partners across the borough.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

The best possible educational outcomes achieved by our children, the stronger the future work force for Halton.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

The educational outcomes for our children and young people is influenced by the quality of education provided within each of our schools and reflects the key priorities within the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2024-2027.

6.4 **Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

The Delivering Better Value (DBV) project takes into account all children and young people across the borough and the achievements made based upon their starting points.

6.5 **Working Towards a Greener Future**

None.

6.6 **Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Progress against each of the priorities identified within the presentation will be tracked and inform future reports to the Department of Education (DfE) and reported to the Policy & Performance Board.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None raised.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None Identified.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

10.1 'None under the meaning of the Act.'