

**SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**10<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

**Directorate of Children Learning and Skills**

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**Report of Banding and Resource Base working groups**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides Schools Forum (SF) with an update on both working groups relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within Slough. These were:

- An update on the Banding working group
- An update on the Resource Base working group

**1.2 Background**

In March 2018, two working groups were established with Head Teachers and SENDCos to re-evaluate Slough's Resource Bases and Banding model for individual top up for children and young people with SEND.

**1.2.1 Banding Working Group**

A small task and finish group of Local Authority officers and school leaders have been working on a revised SEND banding model for Slough designed to:

- Provide consistency: with the SEND Code of Practice – particularly the 4 main categories, the language used across categories and bands and expectations around specialist support and provision
- Offer a common banding structure across mainstream, resource base and specialist provision
- Provide transparency regarding assumptions that underpin how the Local Authority assigns monetary values at each Band
- Help shape how Local Authority officers and colleagues in schools understand SEND and specialist support/provision
- To deliver a transparent Top Up Banding structure which meets the needs of Children and families and is functional across educational settings and independent budgets.

### **1.2.2 Resource Base Working Group**

A small task group of Local Authority officers and school leaders were working on reviewing the current establishment of Resource Bases, of which there were 17, to help develop a strategic approach to best utilising existing provision within Slough.

The expected outcomes from this working group were:

- To ensure consistent and appropriate decisions within the statutory framework for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) meet the identified needs of children and young people.
- To ensure financial probity and transparent decision making in relation to additional resources funded by High Needs Block resources.
- To ensure Slough BC utilises additional resources and Commissions to ensure best Outcomes for all SEND children and their families.
- To ensure Resource Based provision promotes inclusion and promotes access to learning in mainstream settings for SEND children.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1** Schools' Forum is asked to note this report.

## **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To provide Schools Forum members with an update of the work that is taking place and to provide an update regarding the expected timeline of completion for both activities.

## **4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Banding Working Group – Update**

After acknowledging the issues regarding Slough's current banding model, including the five various monetary values that were attached to the same descriptor of need, group members explored banding models used by other Local Authorities.

The task and finish group based its approach on the Essex Model, as this was deemed as the most appropriate banding due to it being derived from the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and thus took into account the four areas of identified need.

It has completed work to customise the need descriptors to the Slough context and to set out expectations about the type of specialist support and provision needed at each band/level.

Four working groups were established during the latter stages of the summer term to support the developments of the banding matrix, consisting of groups responsible for:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Physical and or Sensory Difficulties

Officers within the Local Authority are now finalising proposals for consultation this term.

Officers are testing the customised descriptors and expectations against sample cases and working closely with colleagues in finance to assess the likely monetary values to be associated with each band level.

Officers expect to meet with colleagues from Essex in the coming weeks to share experiences and learning, particularly around:

- How best to weight the various descriptors (SEN categories and band levels) against each other to generate appropriate banding values
- The sophisticated macros that underpin the Essex matrix

The task and finish group will reconvene at the end of November 2018 to consider the draft proposals for wider consultation. Finalised proposals will be brought to Schools Forum in December 2018 in time to seek approval from education settings and parents/carers.

The new banding model will be implemented in time for the new financial year, April 2019 for new requests for assessments and phase transfers.

#### **4.2 Resource Base Working Group – Update**

It was established during the meetings throughout the spring and summer term that:

- There had been a lack of understanding from both Resource Bases and the Local Authority regarding the needs that each Resource Base were meeting.
- There had been a lack of monitoring over Resource Base provision from the Local Authority regarding transitional arrangements, place planning and quality assurance.
- Information on the Local Offer website from Resource Bases was outdated, thus not giving parents appropriate information about Resource Base provision within Slough.

- Service Level Agreements, for those that had one, were due to expire in March 2018.

A Resource Base event was held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, co-hosted by Slough Borough Council and Special Voices (Slough Parent/Carer Forum). The focus of the event was to provide parents/carers and children with an understanding of how each Resource Base operates.

Feedback regarding this event was positive from both schools in attendance and Special Voices. This event also provided an opportunity for schools to learn about current Resource Base provision within Slough and provided an opportunity for schools to network to share best practice.

Meetings are currently taking place with individual Head Teachers to discuss contractual arrangements for their Resource Bases as previous SLAs had expired in March 2018.

The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Agree to the entry criteria and designation of need for each Resource Base
- Confirm commissioned numbers of places for 2018-19 and 2019-20
- Establish robust commissioning arrangements to monitor the Resource Base provision (including; termly meetings with SBC officers, clear transition protocols, updating the Local Offer website and ascertaining appropriate progress monitoring reports)

## Appendix 1 – Timeline for Banding Work

Date	Milestones
July 2018	Sub groups established to support with developing a Slough centric model based on the four identified areas of need.
September 2018	SBC officers to develop and standardise information collated from sub-groups. SBC Officers to work with Finance colleagues to add monetary amounts to banding model.
October 2018	SBC officers to meet with Essex County Council to further support the development of new banding model.
November 2018	Task + Finish group reconvened to allow for members to model the new banding system with existing students.
December 2018	Finalised proposals to be provided at Schools Forum.
January 2019	Consultation with educational settings and parent/carers over new banding model to take place. This will include FAQ coffee morning with parent/carers.
March 2019	Update to be provided to Schools Forum.
April 2019	New banding model implemented for new requests for assessment and phase transfers.

## Appendix 2 –Timeline for Resource Base work

Date	Milestones
September 2018	Resource Base event held to support parents/carers prior to school applications for the following year.
September – October 2018	Service Lead SEND, to meet with individual schools regarding contracts/ SLAs, including confirmation of designation of need (where appropriate) and quality and performance measures.
October 2018	SLAs/Contracts in place for all Resource Base settings
November 2018	Slough Resource Base prospectus to be produced Local Offer for all Resource Bases is up-to-date and accurate Task group to be reconvened to provide all Resource Base heads with an update Confirmation of commissioned places for Resource Bases
February 2019	Deadline for naming children in Resource Bases for 2019/20. Named Resource Bases within EHCPs will correlate with agreed outcomes of working group