



# Briefing note

**To:** Schools Forum **Author:** Mark Taylor/Kevin Burns

**Date:** 16 January 2020

**Purpose of the Paper:**

Information	√
Consultation	
Decision	

**Title of Briefing:** High Needs Subgroup - Update

## Purpose of Paper

- 1.1 It was agreed at Schools Forum on 13 November 2019 to establish a new High Needs Subgroup of Schools Forum to work with the Authority on the next steps in the ARP review. This paper provides an update from the sub group meeting on 19 December 2019. In attendance were:

<b>Schools</b>	
David Baldwin	Churchill Community College
John Croft	Sir James Knott
Peter Gannon	Silverdale School
Angi Gibson	Hadrian Park Primary
Paul Quinn	Longbenton High School
Gavin Storey	Cullercoats Primary
<b>NTC/ENGIE</b>	
Mark Taylor	Commissioning
Michael Johnston	Commissioning
Kevin Burns	School Improvement
Claire Emmerson	Finance
Noel Kay	Finance
Diane Thompson	Finance
Christina Ponting	Schools HR

## **Subgroup Update**

### **2.1 The Changing Needs of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

The Authority presented information on the changing cohort of children with SEND. North Tyneside, like many Local Authorities in the North East and nationally, has continued to experience a significant increase in the numbers of children with SEND.

The most notable changes in recent years have been the increases in the number of children with autism and/or social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH); and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

The number of children with the primary need of autism increased by 79% between 2016 and 2019, with the numbers of children rising from 213 to 381. This trend is reflected in both the needs of children with an Education Health and Care plan (EHC plan) and those requiring a lower level of support. Of those children who have an EHC plan, autism is now the most common primary need (28.2% of the cohort). The Authorities sufficiency planning has highlighted the need to secure special school places for 20 additional pupils with a primary need of autism at Key Stage 3 in each of the next three years from 2020.

The number of children with the primary need of SEMH increased by 67% between 2016 and 2019, with the numbers of children rising from 624 to 1040.

The number of children with the primary need of PMLD, whilst relatively small, increased by 70% since 2016, from 20 to 34.

In contrast to the increases in numbers of children with autism, SEMH, and PMLD described above, the number of children with the primary need of moderate learning difficulty (MLD) has reduced by 30% between 2016 and 2019, from 794 to 553. These changes have implications for the volume and type of places needed in both mainstream and special schools.

### **2.2 ARP Review**

The Authority presented an overview of the occupancy levels in ARPs between September 2016 and June 2019. The subgroup discussed the different types of ARPs for primary and secondary pupils, their focus in terms of the primary SEN need, access and placement in ARPs, the variation in delivery models, funding and the extent to which ARPs are currently meeting the changing needs of the cohort. The number of unfilled places in secondary MLD ARPS was highlighted (this totalled 21 at June 19).

### **2.3 Developing a new North Tyneside Inclusion Strategy**

The subgroup discussed the need for system-wide changes to ARPS to be considered in the context of our SEND arrangements and our approach to inclusion in North Tyneside. The subgroup agreed with the proposal that a new Inclusion Strategy should be developed as a matter of priority. This would seek to clarify our vision for inclusion and build consensus around our shared expectations and consistency of approach across the borough. It would describe our shared purpose, principles and priorities across education, social care and health. It would also enable us to identify the actions we will take to improve the lived experience of our children and young people with SEND. The

new strategy will provide the framework and direction to ensure that the right provision is in place to meet the changing needs of children with SEND.

A number of aspects were considered and the sub group requested further clarity from the Authority on the following issues:

- The scope of the strategy and that this would potentially be a whole system approach across education, health and care;
- The governance arrangements for overseeing and signing off the strategy;
- The process by which it will be developed in terms of co-ordination and lead author;
- How schools and other stakeholders will be engaged and consulted;
- The timeline for completion, given the significance and urgency of developing the new strategy.

The subgroup also received an update on work underway to strengthen our North Tyneside approach to the SEN Code of Practice regarding 'Reasonable Adjustments, Graduation and Best Endeavours.' This workstream will confirm the core expectations around what provision and resources should be available to all children, as well as the targeted support for children with additional needs, and the more specialist support for children with complex needs. This will be a key component of the new Inclusion Strategy.

## 2.4 Current ARP priorities

In advance of a new Inclusion Strategy, it was agreed by the subgroup that the Authority should approach schools with ARPs about their capacity and requirements to offer places for children either currently out of education or in alternative provision. This would include opportunities for placing children where there are unfilled places in ARPs. Any potential placements would be subject to a clear understanding of pupil needs and the availability of the right support to meet need.

## 2.5 Initial consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School

The Melrose Centre was established in 2009, as an ARP for children with autism as part of Longbenton High School. Since then the number of children with autism has increased significantly and the demand for places in the Melrose Centre is now much greater than the number of places available. Alongside that, the overall level and complexity of need of the children accessing Melrose has also increased significantly over time.

Both factors have led to the decision that a change is needed to reflect the specialist secondary offer that is now provided at the Melrose Centre and to increase overall capacity beyond the Melrose Centre. The Authority is supportive of this position and is working in partnership with Longbenton High School and Southlands School to propose that the Melrose Centre will benefit from special school leadership as part of Southlands School.

An initial consultation has taken place with parents, carers and the schools involved. A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) has been compiled providing responses to the themes raised at the consultation sessions. The FAQs are available on the engagement

section of the North Tyneside SEND Local Offer website at:  
<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultation/related-documents/Melrose%20Southlands%20FAQ%20Dec%202019.pdf>

North Tyneside Council's Cabinet will consider a report about the proposal for the Melrose Centre at the meeting on 20 January. The report will recommend that Cabinet approves moving to formal consultation. Should Cabinet give approval the Authority will follow Department for Education guidance which indicates that a formal consultation period of a minimum of four weeks is required, including the publication of formal public notices.

## **Recommendations**

- 3.1 Schools Forum is asked to note and comment on the update report from the subgroup.