

8.7 BMG/SEN: Early Years SEND Funding – procedures and impact



PROGRESS REPORT

Feedback to BMG/SEN: 6th November 2018

Questions asked for consideration:

1. Has the change in SEN Inclusion Funding affected school readiness or the ability for settings and schools to be able to meet need?
2. Has the move to cluster funding impacted on the identification of SEND as children move into primary school?
3. What questions does this work raise for the School Readiness strategic review (MEYSOG) to consider?
4. Are there any recommendations arising for SEN Inclusion Fund?

People involved:

Penny Whitell and Katie Bohannan

Feedback from Early Years SENCo briefing

Focus Group (Early Years Settings) – Maintained Setting – Brian Lee and Stephen Martin (Plymbridge/Ham Drive Nursery Schools, Non maintained Setting - Sarah Carr (Keystone Nurseries. Apologies from Frogmore Montessori Nursery and Mama Bears Nursery.

Feedback from Primary Schools – After discussion with Heidi Price (Headteacher at Yealmpstone Farm Primary school) it was agreed to include a question regarding the impact of the changes to the SEN Inclusion funding in a questionnaire due to be sent out as part of the School Readiness Review being undertaken by MEYSOG.

Timescale

| What | Who | When |
|---|--|--|
| EY SENCo briefing | EY SENCo's | 19 th October 2018 |
| Focus Group (Early Years Settings) | Penny Whitell, Brian Lee, Stephen Martin, Sarah Carr | 31 st October 2018 |
| School readiness strategic review (questionnaire) | All primary schools | Online survey currently being prepared |
| Budget discussion | Penny Whitell and Katie Bohannan | 5 th November 2018 |

Outcomes so far

EY SENCo briefing

Delegates were asked to outline the challenges and opportunities since the introduction of the SEN Inclusion fund in April 2017

| Opportunities |
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| As specific funding/hours are not necessarily allocated to an individual child it gives greater flexibility for settings based on need at any given time. |
| All settings now receive the funding prior to putting the support in place rather than having to claim retrospectively. |
| Beneficial having funding allocated together rather than small amounts for individual children throughout the year |
| Enables settings to tune into the individual needs of children at any given time |
| Creates less dependency for a specific adult which previously when a child had a 1-1 worker it could cause problems if the adult was not there |
| Funding more flexible – can be used to attend TAM meetings, training as well as additional staffing |
| Does not set up parental expectation that their child requires 1-1 support |

| Challenges |
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| Difficult to get parents on board as they want specific benefits for their child |
| Difficult to apply for support as they have such a large cohort of children with SEND – potentially children could be missed |
| Some children do need 1-1 support |
| It can be hard to cluster groups of children when they are different ages and have different needs. |

Focus Group

The group discussed the feedback from the SENCo briefing and based on this and their own views considered the questions identified by BMG:

Has the change in SEN Inclusion Funding affected school readiness or the ability for settings and schools to be able to meet need?

The group felt that more support during the Early Years could reduce the need for support later on and sometimes a greater amount of support for a short period may be more beneficial than a small amount of support for a longer period. However everyone agreed that there is a bigger picture around the quality of provision. SEN Inclusion funding for additional staffing is only beneficial to school readiness if the quality of support is good. It was felt that settings would benefit more from “modelling” of support.

A discussion took place around funding for EY settings in general and there was a feeling that due to more children receiving government funding (2 year old, 30 hour funding) settings are struggling financially and therefore only able to employ to minimum staffing ratios. This is having an impact on their ability to meet need. With regards to sustainability there have been a number of settings this year that have closed.

The group of children settings struggle with are the ones displaying challenging behaviour. These children may have environmental vulnerabilities and not necessarily SEN needs.

The importance for promoting independence as part of school readiness was recognised and that not all EY staff recognise that children also need space.

Retaining skilled staff was raised as a problem as SEN Inclusion funding is temporary based on the cohort of children at any given time.

Has the move to cluster funding impacted on the identification of SEND as children move into primary school?

SEN Inclusion funding should not be identifier of SEND for children moving into primary school. This should be done through the enhanced transition process which is embedded.

The group felt that the emphasis on “cluster” funding has maybe become too rigid and settings may not realise that it is recognised that some children will need 1-1 support and that they can request this.

What questions does this work raise for the School Readiness strategic review (MEYSOG) to consider?

Penny Whitell has liaised with the School readiness strategic group and a question will be added to the questionnaire due to sent to schools and settings

Are there any recommendations arising for SEN Inclusion Fund?

Do we need to make settings more aware that if appropriate they can request individual funding for a child?

Do we need to consider how to enhance “quality” of provision. Should there be more modelling of good practice?

The children requiring most support tend to be children with physical and sensory needs or social, emotional and mental health needs where their behaviour is such that they are a risk to themselves or to others. Should the request form include an identifier as to which is the primary area of need according to the SEND code of practice?

Further discussion is required regarding the hourly rate allocated to settings through the SEN Inclusion fund.

Feedback from schools is required through the school readiness strategic review.

Budget discussion

Penny Whitell and Katie Bohannon have met and the budget so far this year is as follows:

- The total out-turn for 16/17 was **£435,092** (prior to the move to cluster funding in 17/18)

- The total out-turn for 17/18 was **£151,820**. This was skewed by the historic accrual balance of (£50,000) carried forward from 16/17. If we took the accrual balance out of the equation the out-turn would have been in the region of **£200,000**.
- The forecast for 18/19 is **£204,000**. This is slightly higher than last year but it is felt that it is a more realistic reflection of need across the city with regards to children who require 1-1 support rather than “cluster” funding and also 30 hour funding.

Penny Whitell
SEND Service Manager
05/02/18