

HIGH NEEDS BLOCK SUB-GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

The High Needs Sub-group (HNSG) will oversee the expenditure from the High Needs Block (HNB) of and consider requests to utilise funding in order to improve outcomes for children and young people aged 0 to 25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The HNSG is not a decision-making group; it will make recommendations to Schools Forum where necessary.

- 1.1. Following discussion at July 2023 Schools Forum, this report sets out proposals for the development of a High Needs Block (HNB) sub-group of the Schools' Forum. The purpose would be to allow more in-depth consideration of the use of the HNB in partnership with the local authority, bringing high level recommendations back to the Schools' Forum. Camden is currently in the fortunate position of being one of a small number of Local Authorities that are no longer in deficit position and can therefore allocate extra funding to improve outcomes of children/young people with SEND.
- 1.2. Our vision is that every Camden mainstream school can meet the needs of any children in their area, to ensure quality first teaching for all children including those with SEND through continuous improvement, development and curious pursuance of best practice pedagogy.
- 1.3. The sub-group would be a time limited "task and finish" group looking at how the HNB is spent. This could be for 2 terms across the 2023/24 academic year.
- 1.4. It would reflect the fact that the HNB is to meet special educational needs of Camden residents 0-25: not just Camden schools but also children in schools in other boroughs/independent and private schools and young people in colleges/other post-16 provision. Camden has a good baseline on which to build however we know that not all children are included socially in our schools and prepared for adulthood adequately. The link with local colleges is essential. Schools and colleges must have high aspirations around employment leading to the opportunities that exist for supported internships and other employment pathways. Whilst these need to be developed, we know the current opportunities are not fully utilised.
- 1.5. Specific tasks for the sub-group would be:
 - To look at how Camden schools can optimise ENG & cluster working (this would build on existing ENG steering group).
 - To consider the recommendations in the report by Peter Gray when he looked at the current provision in Camden for children and young people with special educational needs.
 - To explore sufficiency of places across Camden schools, including considering the need for new provision and use of vacant space. This would consider the role of specialist provision (special schools and resourced provision) reflecting the legal assumption of mainstream, Camden's commitment to inclusion.
 - How a learning support service can support Camden mainstream schools to include children, enabling all schools to be confident in meeting needs,

and spreading good practice across all schools. This should be not only in terms of teaching and learning but in the context of inclusion, welcoming and the intentional building of relationships with a focus on meeting the requirements of the Children & Families Act 2014 and associated code of practice to prepare children for adulthood.

2. Responsibilities

The HNSG will:

- Consider the recommendations in the report produced by Peter Gray (July 2023) regarding continued strengthening of mainstream provision through the use of ENG and cluster working.
- Explore sufficiency of places across Camden schools, including considering the need for new provision and use of vacant space. This would consider the role of specialist provision (special schools and resourced provision) reflecting the legal assumption of mainstream and Camden’s commitment to inclusion.
- Review outreach services for SEND and alternative provision (AP), in line with the SEND & AP green paper with a focus on the three tiers of support regarding AP.
- Oversee the expenditure to ensure this is providing value for money.
- Provide visible commitment, championing and supporting the needs of children and young people with SEND ensuring that resources are aimed at improving inclusion in local education settings.
- Provide regular updates to Schools Forum, offering advice and recommendations to the Schools Forum regarding the use of High Needs Funding. Through clear reporting this would ensure:
 - ongoing cognisance of issues related to the High Needs Block, and;
 - Schools’ Forum members have a proactive role in HNB decision-making.
- Review, monitor and make recommendations to Schools Forum on directing the allocation of High Needs Funding in relation to:
 - Top-up rates, number of places and support services
 - The wider strategic agenda which underpins Camden’s approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND set out within the Camden Local Area SEND Strategy 2022 to 2027.

3. Membership

Name	Position/Role
Vikram Hansrani	Director of Education Commissioning & Inclusion
<i>TBC</i>	Strategy & Policy Lead
Paul Tanton	SEN Finance & Commissioning Manager
Jessica Juon	Head of SEND & Inclusion
	*X2 - Headteacher – Early Years

	*X2 - Headteacher – Mainstream Primary
	*X1 – Headteacher – Mainstream Secondary
	*X1 – AP representative (where required)
	*X1 – Headteacher with ARP
	*X1 – Headteacher Special School
	*X2 – Governor representation

Membership will consist of Schools Forum members (*).

Headteachers will be nominated to represent their phase of education through respective Headteacher association meetings to provide expert advice on specific topics.

The Group will appoint its own chair at the first meeting of each academic year. The Chair must be a member of the Group, who is also a member of Schools Forum voted by headteachers and school governors on the Schools Forum.

Additional officers (local authority/ schools) will be invited to the HNSG depending on the agenda.

4. Meeting details

- The HNSG will meet half-termly and dates will be set in order to ensure that update reports can be provided for each Schools Forum meeting.
- Meetings will generally be held for 2 hours.
- Meeting minutes will be taken; however, these will focus on actions, decisions and key discussions rather than a detailed transcript of the meeting.
- Agendas, papers and minutes of the previous meeting will be distributed 5 working days in advance, wherever possible.

5. Quorum

While meetings may proceed with lower numbers, at least 4 Headteachers must be present to make a recommendation to Schools Forum.

6. Reporting arrangements

The HNSG will make recommendations to Schools Forum via officer reports.

Appendix 1 – From Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Guidance:

1. It's open to a Schools Forum to set up working groups of members to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Schools Forum itself to consider.
2. The groups can also include wider representation, for example, an early years reference group can represent all the different types of provider to consider the detail of the early years single funding formula.
3. The reference group would then be able to give its considered view on the local authority's proposals to the schools forum.
4. The Schools Forum should not delegate actual decisions or the finalisation of advice to a working group, as this may have the effect of excluding legitimate points of view. These have proved effective for larger local authorities; examples of some working groups are for high needs and early years.

Appendix 2 - Proposed Work Plan:

Meeting One: October/November 2023

SEND Context and Data

- A data position paper will be provided for that meeting with the context of SEND in Camden. This will include; the number of EHCPs and ENG within schools and; the proportion of children and young people accessing mainstream, ARP, special and independent non maintained provision
- Public Health colleagues will attend to discuss the work that's taking place regarding the development of a SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- An update paper will go to the December Schools' Forum

Meeting Two: November 2023 and Meeting Three: TBC

- The next 2 meetings of the sub-group will focus on the recommendations in Peter Gray's report, optimising the work of the clusters to strengthen multi-disciplinary teams to support meet needs of children and young people.

Meeting Four: TBC

- This meeting will focus on the outcomes of the JSNA, with specific focus on identified gaps in provision and sufficiency, including Autism.

A final report would then go to the June meeting of the Schools' Forum with recommendations for implementation in September 2024.