

## Safety Valve Monitoring template

Date Submitted	16 June 2023
Signed off by S151 Officer / Director of Children's Services	Amy Webb (s151) Sheila Smith (DCS)

### Summary:

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 1:	Q1	Q2	Q3
Reform Top Up Funding (TUF) model to align more closely with standard practice	RAG	RAG	RAG

### Progress Update:

The Top Up Funding Consultation was completed and allocating/reallocating TUF to non-EHCP pupils in a termly moderation process was halted in March. Initially there was anxiety from schools and we received a high number of requests for Statutory Assessments from schools. This has impacted on timeliness but the Council has added £1m of capacity to the teams, including Education Psychologists (EP) to recover our position.

At the time of writing, we are achieving 41% timeliness compared to 45% national average and 35% in the South West. Our EP Team is averaging 50 Assessments per month compared to 30 in previous years. The aim is to achieve 60 per month to improve timeliness.

The consultation process was relatively straightforward, though schools have been expressing concerns about the pressures on their budgets this year through the consultation process and a small number have sought to offset costs through making representation for additional TUF. We have declined.

To keep ourselves on track to achieve savings in Top Up Funding, we have set a budget outturn of £16.3m for 2023/24 (lower than the 2022/23 budget of **£18.xm**). Factors influencing our performance are:

- A needs led approach to proactively scheduling statutory assessments of children without EHCPs, and the schools' reactive submissions has meant that we have prioritised those children on higher rates of funding and these children are those who we assumed would be part of the 60—70%, whom we assumed would be allocated an EHCP and associated funding.

- Children funded at lower rates will be assessed during the year but the vast majority have not yet received an assessment so are still receiving the original level of funding.
- Figures at the end of month two also include pupils with bespoke provision at mainstream schools who are funded at the higher rates.

### Next steps

The schedule of assessment dates is being shared with our SEND Improvement Board for the June Meeting

One of the themes of responses to the TUF consultation was that the banding rates in North Somerset are not effective. We have been working with LB Islington (our Sector Led Improvement Partner) to understand their approach to TUF funding levels which uses a needs led matrix and a more nuanced approach than that which we currently use. We will share this with schools within our outcome and this will reduce the extent to which we have to apply higher banding rates as a precaution in order to be able to be confident that we are meeting needs.

We are conducting a closer analysis of the use of TUF in Early Years to align it to schools based TUF.

### Risks

Demand for additional resources grows at a faster pace than we can re-calibrate expectations.

RAG - RED

### Mitigation

Whilst there has been a national surge in demand for EHCPs, we need to focus on our own strategy and build capacity and confidence within the ordinarily available provision in schools. Strategies such as our approach to Nurture will contribute to the increase in system confidence, especially within the parent/carer community.

RAG Post mitigation – AMBER

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 2:	Q1	Q2	Q3

Increase Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capacity in mainstream schools via a phased introduction of Nurture Groups (to manage and reduce Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) demand), and Resource Base places to respond to the highest incidence of need after SEMH	RAG	RAG	RAG
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**Progress Update:**

All projects on track. NSC has forward funded projects at risk to get them started whilst the DfE capital Bid was being evaluated. The capital bid was successful and we have received feedback that the bid was very high quality with a coherent approach consistent with our overall strategy.

The existing Nurture Groups are showing immediate results in improvements in terms of children’s ability to learn independently and their ability to assimilate well within a class of their peers. The Nurture Groups are proving exceptionally popular with parents, pupils and schools. The secondary school Nurture Groups have been more challenging to implement because of the nature of the school organisation (i.e. pupils moving between lessons rather than remaining in a single class base which makes curriculum delivery more challenging). Nurture UK has supported these schools through visits to other secondary Nurture Schools. See Nurture Group Report attached.

The Nurture Group room at Yatton Infants school was lost in a major fire on the school site and the school has been forced to decant to other sites. The Nurture Group staff are so committed to the Nurture Group that they are continuing the work with the children in their emergency alternative accommodation. The Nurture Group room will be re-instated in their new temporary accommodation (demountables to be erected over the summer holidays) and also within the permanent re-build.

The second cohort of Nurture Schools have commenced training with Nurture UK and NS schools have approached us to ask if we can broker a volume purchase arrangement with Nurture UK so that more schools can benefit. One Trust has been so impressed that it has signed up all its schools to become Nurture Schools. We are working towards an Early Years Pilot.

The Resource Bases are all on track to be delivered and schools are delighted that funding has been confirmed for the capital programme for their Nurture Group rooms.

**Risks**

None identified at this point

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
<p>Condition 3:</p> <p>Standardise the support available for children and young people to reduce costly bespoke packages and ensure all children and young people receive support through the local outreach response or from the regionally pre-qualified framework of Alternative Provision (AP) providers</p>	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
<p><b>Progress Update:</b></p> <p>We have recently appointed a new Head Teacher for the Voyage Learning Campus which will provide the nucleus for our AP and are actively working through the scope of the new offer with her. We are visiting Islington's New River Campus soon as they have a successful model already which is similar to our own aspirations. This will help to confirm the scope.</p> <p>We are actively seeking sites for the new purpose-built provision. We currently have 34 children and young people on roll but we are aiming for an active caseload of 85 in the new model.</p> <p>A pilot of outreach support for one of our secondary schools is currently being arranged to commence in September 2023 with a roll out of the remainder of the offer from January 2024.</p> <p>Special Schools are working with the Head of SEND to formalise their outreach offer. There has been an increased take-up of the offer this year. One of our Special Schools who received an RI judgement this year is consolidating their school improvement work before developing their Outreach Offer but we are confident that their journey towards Good will be a short one and that their own offer will develop from that point.</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>Aggressive commercial activity within the Independent Sector to counter the development of this offer</p> <p>RAG - AMBER</p> <p><b>Mitigation</b></p> <p>Clear focus on quality and value to for money within a coherent system.</p> <p>RAG Post mitigation - GREEN</p>			

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 4:  Increase capacity in specialist provision to offer appropriate education locally and minimise the need for costly out of area placements	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
<p><b>Progress Update:</b></p> <p>Baytree Clevedon Campus is on track to open January 2024. There are clear transition arrangements for all children who will transfer to this site from their existing placements.</p> <p>The Capital Team is working with local Clevedon schools and local councillors and businesses to ensure pupils are welcomed into the area and that they become part of the community.</p> <p>The Council has forward funded the capital works for the 5 Resource Bases so active work has begun on these and we are pleased to have had our bid confirmed as successful.</p> <p>There has been a delay at the Planning Stage of the delivery of the Lime Hills Free School permanent site, partly because of a late submission and partly because of the need to purchase further land to deliver the scheme. The team is meeting with the DfE in early July to pursue contingency planning for temporary accommodation as it is unlikely that this scheme will open in September 2024.</p> <p><b>Risk</b></p> <p>Children with SEMH needs will need to be placed in provision at considerable distance from their family homes if we are unable to establish an appropriate contingency plan. This would generate a cost of c£55-70k per annum per child (up to £2m per annum in total).</p> <p>RAG – RED</p> <p><b>Mitigation</b></p> <p>The DfE is the agreed accountable party for providing alternative temporary accommodation which we are very happy to work with them on.</p> <p>RAG Post mitigation – AMBER (Change for children with SEND is extremely challenging for them)</p>			

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 5:  Replicate the Pre-16 TUF process for Post-16 placements, reduce double funding arrangements, and create parity with the Pre-16 system	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
<p><b>Progress Update:</b></p> <p>A new mainstream funding matrix for EHC plans is being developed and which we will be looking to introduce across Post 16 so that the matrix they receive in Pre16 settings will roll over to Post 16 settings with it being monitored and reviewed via the annual review mechanism and updates to the EHC plan. We will commence this work in Term 1 of the 2023/24 Education year.</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>This poses significant potential challenges for the College because of the impact on their budget.</p> <p>RAG – AMBER</p> <p><b>Mitigation</b></p> <p>The Council needs to build early relationships with the incoming Principal as the current Principal is retiring this August.</p> <p>RAG Post Mitigation - AMBER</p>			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 6:  Ensure Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are reviewed at appropriate intervals	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
<p><b>Progress Update:</b></p> <p>The SEND Team is proactively reviewing which Plans have effectively delivered outcomes and can be ceased and better pathway planning for</p>			

children as they reach Year 9. This includes independence training such as independent travel instruction, relationships training and independent living skills. Post 16 opportunities such as Supported Internships are being promoted with third party partners such as Boomsatsuma.

Training and guidance is being delivered to schools on using the EHC portal to manage annual reviews. This will be started in September and is being overseen by the SEND Improvement Board who have requested a timeline and are monitoring the delivery of this piece of work.

**Risks**

None identified

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 7:	Q1	Q2	Q3
Promote the Graduated Response approach within the SEND system, enabling earlier identification of need and ensuring consistency of assessment, planning, and review	RAG	RAG	RAG

**Progress Update:**

We have now re-launched our Graduated Response and rolled this out with schools and settings, parents and carers. The Graduated Response has been well received by our stakeholders. Its success may be in part because we approached this as a system wide piece of work through the Community of Practice and ownership of the tools was already high by the time it was launched.

Of 46 schools surveyed by our PCF for parental satisfaction for support for SEND children, 40 scored 3 or above (5 being high) and 15 of these scored 4 or 5.

**Risks**

None identified

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 8:	Q1	Q2	Q3

Increase the availability and timeliness of Education Psychologists (EPs) involvement and use of the Additional Analysis of Needs Tool (AANTS)	RAG	RAG	RAG
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**Progress Update:**

Following our increase to our capacity in this team, North Somerset is now one of a very small number of authorities that has a fully staffed EP service and is the only authority in South West in this position. We are adding additional resources to support the work in assessing children already in receipt of TUF (see above). We have increased a rate of assessment from 30 per month to 50 per month and are aiming to achieve 60 per month with the new locum resources.

AANTS has been successfully launched and has undertaken a small number of assessments. These have been useful to schools. Our EP Team are of the view that in some of the first assessments, the schools may have used the process for children whose needs are already high rather than those who are exhibiting early indicators of need. We are working with them to ensure that AANTS is used earlier rather than later. We are developing an Early Years AANTS to reach children much earlier in their lives and before needs escalate.

**Risks**

NOTE: We are currently assuring ourselves of the the integrity of the security arrangements for the IT system on which AANTS is delivered as part of our organisational preparation to safeguard against cyber attack.

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 9:	Q1	Q2	Q3
Invest in training within schools to increase emotional schools-based avoidance resources	RAG	RAG	RAG

**Progress Update:**

A programme of 'The Healing Classroom' Training has been commissioned for all schools and will be delivered in a Train the Trainer model in every school from Term 6 and then throughout the year and will continue throughout the year. Schools are in the process of nominating their in-house Trainer.

**Risks**

None identified

Agreement Condition		Assurance Level	
Condition 10:  Develop an Emerging Needs plan for 0–5-year-olds to help identify need and tailor support for very young children	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
<p>Progress Update:</p> <p>A review of the process has been completed. This together with the completed data and financial analysis are now ready as follows; in respect of the process this is almost ready to share with providers; and considered thought and possible consultation on any rate changes will occur during terms 1 and 2 of the new educational year via any relevant consultation and engagement with stakeholders. With the outcomes potential implemented at the start of term 4 but no later than term 5 – which is the start of the 2024-25 financial year.</p>			
Agreement Condition		Assurance Level	
Condition 11:  The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2025-26 and in each subsequent year. The authority undertakes to control and reduce the cumulative deficit as follows, not including any contribution made by the department through this agreement: Year / Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at year end £m 2022-23 £20.9m 2023-24 £24.0m 2024-25 £24.6m 2025-26 £23.7m 2026-27 £22.5m 2027-28 £21.1m	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG

#### Progress Update:

At the end of the 2022-23 financial year the DSG deficit was £9.6m after the safety valve payment of £8.44m was received otherwise the cumulative deficit would have been £18.1m.

Extrapolating 2023-24 spend to date (with Month 2 figures) produces a forecast year end position of £6.7m deficit, or £24.8m against target of £24.0m. Whilst the programme overall is behind target by £0.8m, this can be recovered as interventions are embedded throughout the year.

#### Emerging risks:

The programme is overall behind target by £0.885m as not all interventions have been introduced.

#### Mitigations:

- Roll out of remaining interventions including recruitment to council funded posts (due to timing of SV agreement it has not yet been possible to onboard the full team)
- Refine year end forecast to include phased interventions as above
- Ongoing monitoring by SV team including s151 officer to highlight specific spend areas which are off track

#### Any support required:

It would be useful to talk with an authority that is successfully managing demand arising from children in early years as we are keen to align our own local mechanisms with TUF for schools. Early Years funding arrangements are very different to schools funding.

## Summary of Appendices

- Nurture Group Pilot Report

### Key contact details:

- Pip Hesketh, AD Education Partnerships: [pip.hesketh@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:pip.hesketh@n-somerset.gov.uk)