

Schools & High Needs Committee 3 June 2020  
referred by Services & Contracts Committee 7 May 2020 meeting

## Oxfordshire Hospital School (OHS) funding arrangements consultation outcome

| Settings           |   | Sector           |   |
|--------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Academies          | ✓ | Foundation Stage |   |
| Maintained Schools | ✓ | Primary          | ✓ |
| PVI Nurseries      |   | Secondary        | ✓ |
| Special Schools    |   | Special          | ✓ |
| Local Authority    | ✓ | 16+              |   |
| Schools Forum      | ✓ | High Needs       | ✓ |

- 1. Item for Information**
- 2. Purpose of Report (details in C.2 of the Protocol)**  
To provide Schools Forum with the outcome of the requested Oxfordshire Hospital School funding arrangements consultation
- 3. Recommendations/Actions/Decisions for Schools Forum (see C.3 of the Protocol)**  
N/A – for information
- 4. Main Body of the Report (see C.4 of the Protocol)**

### The Context

Oxfordshire Hospital School operates under duties described in section 19 of the 1996 Education Act.

Oxfordshire Schools Forum has debated the existing funding arrangements for education of medically unfit pupils on three occasions. As previously stated, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) accepts without reservation that it is responsible for this statutory duty to children from day 16 of their absence from school for medical reasons and funds it, incorporating the inputs below for children who are medically unfit at home or in hospital: -

Academic support with the pupil's home school curriculum

A Personal Development Curriculum including:

PSHE & C

Careers advice & guidance

Access to digital technologies to assist, where appropriate

Telepresence robots

Google classroom

Kindles

Chromebooks

Oxfordshire Schools Forum has received, twice, a budget breakdown of Oxfordshire Hospital School finances and services offered.

The existing funding model requires referring schools to pay their basic AWPU to OHS for the duration that their pupil requires that service. This does not include Pupil Premium or SEN funding.

Oxfordshire Schools Forum requested that a consultation exercise be conducted with all state funded schools in the county to gather wider views to those expressed by Schools Forum.

Consultation: -

The consultation was shared through Heads Briefing and Governors Newsletter and was open for three weeks for School Leaders to respond.

Three options were presented.

1. Remain as we are with OHS charging

All services outlined in a-h continue to be included as part of the OHS offer

- a. Admission
- b. Pre-teaching
- c. Engagement
- d. Tuition (fully funded by OCC)
- e. Reintegration
- f. Ongoing professional advice
- g. Ongoing professional essentials including safeguarding
- h. Other costs

2. Remove AWPU charges made by OHS to home schools rendering schools obliged to provide themselves

Only a, d and h are provided:

- a. Admission process
- d. Tuition
- h. Other costs

3. Flexible charging structure based on individual needs

Charges are levied based on the needs of the pupil as assessed and agreed at point of admission to the OHS. Schools would need to attend complex case review meeting to discuss the referral and confirm the terms of the charging agreement.

Consultation outcome:-

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Remain as we are with OHS charging  | 21 |
| 2. Remove AWPU charges made by OHS to home schools rendering schools obliged to provide themselves | 1  |
| 3. Flexible charging structure based on individual needs   | 3  |
| Total responses  | 25 |

All 25 responders elected to remain anonymous.

Free text narrative

The hospital school offer an excellent provision at a reasonable cost. 28 Jan 2020

Consistent fair service with easy cost structure. 28 Jan 2020

It is important to ensure that this excellent service continues to be able to offer its current level of support - which is very reasonable for schools compared to other providers. 28 Jan 2020

The need to access OHS varies enormously from child to child. Therefore, it is appropriate for each case to be considered in its own merit. Making this unnecessarily administratively burdensome to schools which are also experiencing high levels of stress due to loss of funding and services should not be necessary or used to act as a disincentive to selecting this option 28 Jan 2020

The service works exceptionally well for pupils. There are a number of ways the OHS can support with a variety of pathways offering a range of services to schools. Where school cannot make reasonable adjustments for their pupils the OHS are able to support them in a number of ways. The amount charged back to schools is relatively cost effective when compared with other provisions. 28 Jan 2020

For the reason that items "a" to "h" adequately covers the needs. 29 Jan 2020

A pupil's education is the responsibility of the school that they are on roll with therefore they should meet the costs of a suitable provision if the pupil is unable to access the home school's provision. 30 Jan 2020

It is difficult to cost the invaluable impact of the multiple offer (a-h) from OHS to support these extremely vulnerable young people and their schools in challenging social and educational circumstances. If OHS receives less money, resulting in a reduced offer a,d,h), schools will have to pick up the work, for which they have much less proficiency, and associated costs. Cost to schools is likely to be much higher than current OHS costing and offer, where schools benefit from OHS economies of scale and expertise across the Outreach service. The current OHS charging is clearly the best value for money across the education system. 31 Jan 2020

School funding is very tight especially for small schools. We are in the process of preparing a 5 year budget to clear our deficit and may need to lose teachers. We would therefore welcome a flexible structure so that if one of our pupils were to need hospital school we could review the child's provision in collaboration with others and work out what is most 13 Feb 2020

Appropriate taking into account the needs of that child and what we can afford to pay taking into account the needs of the rest of the children to whom we have a responsibility to education. We are clear that hospital school offers outstanding provision but if the cost of this is high then the provision to the rest of the children in our school could suffer. A terrible balancing act. We value very much the support that OHS gives to our students and would prefer that the current funding system continues. 13 Feb 2020

Schools cannot employ staff at school if home school funding is not guaranteed 13 Feb 2020

**5. Benchmarking Information – if available (see C5 of the Protocol)**

There is no officially published national benchmarking information for Hospital Schools funding arrangements. Schools Forum is entitled to request information from <https://nahe.org.uk/> National Association of Hospital Education.

**6. Financial and Staff Implications - centrally and for schools (see C.6 of the Protocol)**

Schools may wish to consider building a contingency for this liability and duty to medically unfit pupils in their budgets.

Schools Forum may wish to note, that, despite stated implications of an 8% uplift in the Oxfordshire Hospital School budget, the DfE announcement is for all hospital education costs. This is not limited to the Oxfordshire Hospital School which it is proposed will receive a 1.84% uplift for 2020-21 whilst experiencing doubling in demand since September 2019.

**7. Equal Opportunities Implications and Impact on Equality Groups (see C.7 of the Protocol)**

Medically unfit pupils have statutory entitlement to education which OCC funds. Schools Forum may also wish to consider schools duties laid out in the statutory guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

**8. Conclusions (see C8 of the Protocol)**

88% of responders state that they do not favour a change to the current funding arrangements of the OHS. Oxfordshire County Council is in accord with this majority view to sustain an 'Outstanding' provision and national leader in innovative practice for the benefit of Oxfordshire's medically unfit pupils.

Oxfordshire County Council officers recommend that Oxfordshire Schools Forum considers the affordability of small schools using all measures, not through the limited lens of education for medically unfit pupils in isolation.

Oxfordshire County Council officers also recommend that Oxfordshire Schools Forum acknowledges that this has been a challenging time for OHS during this period of scrutiny.

**9. Future Review by Forum in: 3 months/6 months/9 months/1 year (delete as appropriate) (see C.9 of the Protocol)**

OCC proposes that Schools Forum plans to review this matter in three years.

**10. Contact Details of Lead Officer/Author (see C.10 of the Protocol)**

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact:

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**11. Officers/Staff attending to present the Paper (see C.11 of the Protocol)**

If different from the Lead Officer/Author, please list name(s) below and, if more than one, obtain permission of the Chair.