Strategic approaches to managing SEND and inclusion:

Where do clusters fit in?

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Broad strategic approaches

- **'Procurement'**
  - INMSS commissioning approaches
  - Creating more local capacity (as an alternative to higher cost placements)
    - Increasing places in existing provision
    - New provision (special free schools; new resource bases)
  - Impact on overall costs? on use of INMSS?

Broad strategic approaches

- **'Matching needs and services'**
  - Clearer thresholds
  - Banding
  - Ordinarily available provision
  - Graduated approach
  - Issues: robust definitions? criteria or hurdles?

Broad strategic approaches

- **'Increasing capacity for inclusion'**
  - Experts at hand
  - Inclusion bases
  - Broader messaging
  - Issues: EAH role and expected outcomes; focus and funding of inclusion bases; continuing disincentives for schools

Broad strategic approaches

- **'Cluster model'**
  - Collective responsibility for meeting needs within available budget
    - Operational processes vs broad strategic intent
    - Funding defined/not open-ended
  - Focus on funding and support for mainstream schools and settings

Cluster model for mainstream HN funding

- Core features
  - Local groups of mainstream schools working together in partnership with LA to deploy funding in a more equitable/flexible way
  - Short-term or longer-term allocations
  - Individual pupils, groups and schools
  - Not dependent on EHCPs to access

Cluster model for mainstream HN funding

- LA participation
  - Around 30 LAs already engaged or actively pursuing
  - Distributed across a number of regions
    - London
    - Yorkshire & Humberside
    - NE
    - Eastern
    - SE19
  - Increasing national, regional and local interest
  - Regional communities of practice

Cluster model for mainstream HN funding

- Evidence of impact
  - Significant culture change
  - Positively received by SENDCos/Heads
  - Constructive peer support and challenge
  - Parents happy with the system (as long as children's needs are being met)
  - EHCPs starting to plateau
  - Team around the cluster

- Questions/discussion

Risks if no shift in culture

- Continuing/increasing demand for funding and provision (pre statutory changes)
- Increased call on school budgets for ‘first £6k’ of provision with only marginal increase (IMF is short-term and intended as developmental). Leads to increased budget pressures at school level and/or pressure to segregate
- Further increases in HN deficits arising from increasing demand
- Increased pressure on LA SEND casework capacity leading to greater parental dissatisfaction and lower performance (quality and timescales). No extra staffing built into core LA budgets despite Government expectation of further EHCP increase (to 7.5%)
- Further demands on external services for statutory activity jeopardising new focus on early intervention (Experts at Hand)
- More limited capacity for new investment at local level/increased devolution of HNB to schools as increasingly tied down by EHCP requirements