



NOTES FROM THE MEETING WITH THE DfE

Meeting with:	Department for Education at Sanctuary Buildings, Westminster
Meeting Date/Time:	Wednesday 14th March 2018 2:00pm – 3:30pm
Present:	Elizabeth Horne (Special Schools that are Academies Representative) Deidre Fitzpatrick (SWALLs) Paul McGill (SWALLs) Mark Dale-Emberton (FLSE representative) Adam Boddison (NASEN) Penny Barratt (Special Teaching School representative) Dominic Wall (West and South Yorkshire Special School representative) Graham Quinn (Chair of SSV and representative for SSAT) Stuart Miller (DFE – Deputy Director SEND) Christopher Eridani-Ball (DFE) Andre Imich (DFE Professional Advisor) Benedict Coffin (DFE Finance)
Apologies:	Mark Collis (Special Teaching School representative) Clare Dorer (Independent Special Schools representative)

Stuart opened the meeting by offering a brief precise of the Lenehan review into care of children with learning disabilities. This, and other recent publications/information, has led the DFE to explore the possibility of further developing policy and practice. Stuart explained some of the challenges that are impacting upon the system – some discussion centred around the numbers of young people with EHCPs, the numbers of young people at SEN support and the shift (of more children/young people with EHCPs) being educated in special schools. We also discussed the trend of more children and young people (with SEND) being home educated and the increase in children with SEND being excluded. Stuart outlined how this complex situation needed to be further understood – especially with regards to effective commissioning, further developing LA/MAT/School strategic planning and ensuring resources are appropriately utilised to support learning. All agreed that it was an appropriate time to both review present practice and explore further policy development. This discussion led into the first agenda item.

1. Budgets especially with regards to pay award

EHE and PBT outlined the challenges that special schools are facing regarding both present budgets and future financial projections. SSV were able to clearly articulate examples of the





disproportionate impact of the proposed NJC pay award. We mentioned the staff ratio of teaching staff to non-teaching staff was around 50:50 (as opposed to mainstream schools that were @ 70:30). Some work had been prepared before the meeting and all schools were reporting significant increases (if and when the pay award is agreed) – some as large as £130k- £150k. SSV members were keen to understand if this proposed increase would be funded. SSV colleagues, through the following debate, were able to put forward the views from schools notably the lack of growth within base funding (£10k since 2012), anomalies relating to “top up” and disparity between free school meal allocations– the DFE have agreed to explore the matter further. ([Notes attached - 1](#))

2. School health support within special schools

DWL presented a paper prepared by Bradford and South Yorkshire Schools ([attached - 2](#)). This clearly explained the frustrations and challenges felt by many school leaders. Dominic was able to talk about the issues in Kent where there appears to be significant variation between CCGs. This powerful presentation ([attached – 3](#)) was well received by all attendees and we are hopeful a joint forum could be arranged that involves NHS England, the DFE and SSV representatives/schools.

3. Funding strategy for transport for children of non-statutory school age

By agreement DFE officials will pick this issue up with the school that raised the challenge.

4. Teaching School Alliances and KPIs

By agreement DFE officials will pick these issues up with the schools/TSAs that raised the challenge.

5. Tension between schools and the LA with regards to applications for free schools

GQN outlined an issue brought to his attention from a number of schools and MATS in the Midlands. There is an alleged tension between LAs and schools with regards to their support (or lack of support) for free schools. DFE officials were appraised of the LAs involved and SSV will continue to lobby on this issue when they meet Sir David Carter. Some discussion took place regarding whether there will be a new round of free school applications – schools are welcome to contact GQN for a position.

6. Apprenticeship levy

By agreement DFE officials will pick this issue up with the school that raised the challenge. (please see email)

