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| <b>Title of policy / procedure / function / project / decision:</b> | Proposal to cease Extended Day/Residential Annual Grant to 3 Special Schools in Cheshire West and Chester |
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### **Evidence based equality analysis.**

Main aims, purpose, and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

In 2013, the Council agreed to provide an annual grant to 4 special schools in the borough to provide an enhanced education offer to eligible children and young people: **Education Linked Extended Day/Residential annual grant.**

The conditions of the grant stated the following:

- *An extended day including up to 2 nights stay funded to support education in a provision that can sustain and promote appropriate gain in emotional development removing barriers to learning as part of an overall strategy.*
- *It is expected the provision will be supported by facilitated 'Early Intervention' as is standard in good practice, so KS2/3 target cohort.*
- *An expansion to a wider cohort of young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) across the borough to be implemented from April 2016.*

*To qualify for 2 nights funded to support educational progress pupil may exhibit one or more of the following.*

- *Lack of commitment to 'education' overall, linked to prior experience in previous educational establishments.*
- *Family dynamics such that everyday routine does not promote readiness for learning.*
- *Attendance and/or attainment below expectation*
- *Pupil may struggle to make and sustain positive relationships with adults and/or peers; consequently, pupil may seek negative attention, actively undermine relationships (often behaviours associated with ADHD)*
- *Poor/low self-esteem linked to cognition/learning often resulting in non-compliant or non-engaging behaviour with some noted acted out verbal or physical aggression.*

Proposed Strategies Linked to Outcomes:

- *Attainment boost in all areas of the curriculum through access to literacy support programme.*
- *Attendance improved through acquisition of basic skills related to daily routine - with parents/carers encouraged to use the same or similar sleep, hygiene, and boundaries with reward at home.*

- *Emotional development and readiness to learn (in line with Pupil Attitude to Self and School and Boxall profiling) supported across the 24 hours curriculum through individual tailored strategies and relevant qualifications, such as BTEC level 1 'My Skills'.*

Following a review of the conditions of the grant, the ceasing of the annual grant for the 3 schools who continue to offer the provision is being proposed as the current use of the grant does not meet the agreed conditions. 1 of the 4 schools has consulted and closed the provision from September 2025. No staff were impacted negatively.

### **Communication and Engagement**

Engagement meetings were held with the following groups in March 2024:

- Head teachers of the 4 Special Schools.
- School residential staff in the 4 schools
- School parent/carers meetings in all 4 schools
- Views of children and young people were collected from all 4 schools
- Cheshire West and Chester Special School Headteacher Group (CWASSH)

Lead officer: Debbie Edwards

Stakeholders: Staff, parents/carers, and young people in 3 special schools (1 school has ceased the offer from September 2025). 2 of the remaining schools are maintained by the Council and 1 is part of a Multi Academy Trust.

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative, or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made, and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium, or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence.

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| Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Neutral</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Positive</b>                                                                                                                                              | <b>Negative</b>                                                                                                                                   |
| Target group / area                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Race and ethnicity.</b><br><br>(including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)                                                 | Low Impact<br><br>The review is neutral as the impact is universal and future cohorts both from children and young people and staff likely to be impacted.<br><br>The schools have been signposted to other funding opportunities to continue with the offer to young people and therefore reduce the impact on staff. |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Disability</b><br><br>(as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Low Impact<br><br>Staff disability is equitable across all groups of staff regardless of disability. Staff from all cohorts will be supported by schools and | Low Impact<br><br>The target cohort agreed as part of the Conditions of Grant is Key Stage 2 and Key stage 3 young people subject to and EHCP who |

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| person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities) |  | <p>HR. Reasonable adjustments will be made as appropriate and in compliance with statutory compliance.</p> | <p>meet the eligibility criteria. The current cohort includes young people who do not meet the eligibility criteria either due to age or identified areas of need/criteria.</p> <p>The extended curriculum being supported can be delivered through the school's curriculum. Preparation for Adulthood and Independence skills can be taught in the school or extended school day without the need for the additional funding or via the application for other funding grants which include identified funds to support extended day activities, e.g., Wrap Around Care which Special Schools are eligible. Preparation for adulthood could be taught via Direct Payments grant, some young people are eligible for Short Breaks.</p> |
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| <b>Sex</b> (male or female)                                                                                                                                  | Low Impact<br><br>Equitable impact for both staff and young people. |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Gender identity</b> (gender reassignment)                                                                                                                 | Low Impact<br><br>Equitable impact for both staff and young people. |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Religion and belief</b> (including lack of belief)                                                                                                        | Low Impact<br><br>Equitable impact for both staff and young people. |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and others)                                                                        | Low Impact<br><br>Equitable impact for both staff and young people. |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50, younger older people 51 – 75/80; older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as |                                                                     | Low Impact<br><br>All staff are equally impacted regardless of age. Redeployment opportunities to be offered | Low Impact<br><br>The provision is only statutory if residential provision is named on the young person's Education |

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| <p>overriding consideration should be given to needs)</p> |  | <p>by schools. Positions are available in other residential settings across children's Services.</p> | <p>Health Care Plan (EHCP is a statutory commissioning document). All other young people it is an optional offer.</p> <p>By August 2026 there will be no young people of statutory school age with the provision named on an EHCP.</p> <p>The development and implementation of a decision-making protocol and data system to record and report which pupils are accessing which provisions, reasons why, qualifications achieved, budget and payment systems. (Schools Forum Report September 2015). This has not been achieved across all 3 schools.</p> <p>There are young people from all Key stages who access the offer who are outside the target cohort of KS2 and KS3. All schools do have other opportunities that they are able to offer to support the development of</p> |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                        |  | <p>independence and engagement skills as part of the school day and extra-curricular offer.</p> <p>The conditions of grant that accredited courses to be fully implemented in all schools by September 2015, AQA and ASDAN (Schools Forum Report September 2015) cannot be evidenced in all schools.</p>                                                                               |
| <p><b>Care Experienced</b> (all young people and adults who have been in the care of Cheshire West and Chester Council - for a period of 13 weeks or more - from the age of 14 years. This includes those children/young people for whom the Council currently or have previously held corporate parenting responsibilities)</p> | <p>Low Impact</p> <p>All staff are equally impacted regardless of care experience.</p> |  | <p>High Impact</p> <p>All children are equally impacted regardless of care experience.</p> <p>This is an educational funded offer to support engagement in learning and not a 'care' offer.</p> <p>Some pupils accessing both residential offer and short break offer – this could be placing pupils at risk of exceeding permitted number of nights accessing residential and the</p> |

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|                                                                    |  |            | <p>consideration of 'care' proceedings should be implemented.</p> <p>One school state the 'provision serves families navigating the care continuum of need...providing respite care' The original agreement clearly states it is not a respite offer. This grant is funding via Education grant and therefore should only be used for educational purposes.</p> <p>There is inconsistency access criteria across the schools.</p> <p>Young people from other local authorities who attend the schools are also benefitting from the grant funded from Cheshire West and Chester's education funding. This is not compliant with DfE guidelines.</p> |
| <b>Carers</b> (people who care for others, informally or formally) |  | Low Impact |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                                                                                                                               |                                                                                              | <p>The provision offers support for access to education and therefore caring responsibilities should not be impacted.</p> <p>Staff who are carers and have restricted times for working may be impacted. Redeployment to appropriate roles should be considered by schools and opportunities within the wider Council provisions will also be shared.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Rural communities</b>                                                                                                      | No impact                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Areas of deprivation</b> (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived) | Equitable offer across the staff and school community and no criteria re status is required. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>Low Impact</p> <p>Equality of offer across all young people with Education, Health, Care Plans – the original agreement states that an expansion to a wider cohort of young people with EHCP was to be implemented from April 2016. This equitable offer has not</p> |

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|                                                                          |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>been implemented by the schools and therefore not compliant with the conditions of the grant. There is inconsistency of evidence for eligibility – e.g., one school identify, parental, pupil, and social care requests as part of access criteria, not in line with original agreement.</p>                                 |
| <p><b>Human rights</b> (see guidance note for key areas to consider)</p> | <p>All cohorts of staff are equally impacted. Re deployment and other employment options will be offered to staff.</p> | <p>Medium Impact</p> <p>School Staffing Regulations (England) 2009, confirm that it is the duty of the employer in each school, which would be the Governing Body of the maintained schools or The Academy/Trust Board, to carry out a staffing consultation and redundancy process, independently, with their staff to affect a full and fair process. This should include consultation with relevant Trade Union representatives/bodies. In the event of a decision to cease funding for the</p> | <p>Low Impact</p> <p>No statutory responsibilities for children unless included in EHCP. All children will continue to receive the statutory right to an education appropriate to meet their individual needs.</p> <p>If provision is named on a young person's EHCP spot purchasing will be implemented where appropriate.</p> |

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|  |  | <p>extended day/residential provision, and no alternative funding is identified by the school, schools should engage with their respective HR/Legal provider, in order to undertake a consultation and restructure process, identifying staff 'at risk' of redundancy and assessing options for re-deployment, salary safeguarding and if necessary, dismissal via redundancy. Re-deployment of staff may be feasible within the employing organisation, if sufficient and suitable alternative employment is agreed. Re-deployment outside of the employing school cannot be enforced, as it is the decision of the Governing Body as to whether an individual should be employed, but every effort should be made to identify suitable vacancies and to signpost staff, to minimise the burden of redundancy.</p> |  |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Re-deployment into other roles within the school as an alternative to redundancy, but there is no guarantee, staff being offered 'hours in the day' does not mean that staff must accept the offer. |  |
| <b>Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities</b> (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services) | <p>Children will be supported to engage in education via Strategies available to all schools' settings.</p> <p>The grant funded an additional non statutory offer funded by the Designated Schools Grant. It has not been extended to all young people across the borough, with EHCP as was part of the Conditions of Grant.</p> | <p>Low Impact</p> <p>Staff currently working hours outside of school day will be encouraged to consider similar opportunities available in other Children's Services residential provisions.</p>    |  |
| <b>Procurement/partnership</b> (if project due to be carried out by                                                                                                                                                                          | No Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |

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| contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance) |  |  |  |
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**Evidence (see guidance note for details of what to include here):**

**Action plan:**

| <b>Actions required</b>                                                                 | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Outcomes required</b>                                                         | <b>Officer responsible</b>                             | <b>Review date</b>     |
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| Report to Corporate Management Board.                                                   | high            | Decision re ceasing of the grant.                                                | A Perraton/S Thirlway                                  | December/ January 2025 |
| Schools to be informed of the decision of Corporate Management Board                    | high            | Schools inform staff at the earliest opportunity and begin consultation process. | S Thirlway and School Governing Bodies/Trust Boards    | January 2026           |
| Schools to consider other funding opportunities signposted by local authority officers. | high            | Schools to make decision to continue with Extended Day offer if appropriate.     | School Governing Bodies/Trust Boards and Head Teachers | February 2026          |

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| Schools to consult with HR re alternative options for staff who are impacted, redeployment to other roles within the setting and wider council where appropriate. | high | Staff who are likely to be impacted secure alternative roles as appropriate. | School Governing Bodies/Trust Boards and Head Teachers | February 2026 |
|                                                                                                                                                                   |      |                                                                              |                                                        |               |
| Schools Forum to be informed.                                                                                                                                     | high | Schools Forum to be aware of the decision to cease.                          | Director of Education/Head of Education and Inclusion  | January 2026  |
| Council to consider implications of future naming of residential provision on EHCP for young people                                                               | high | Council to explore commissioning of places on individual needs led basis     | Director of Education                                  | February 2026 |

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| <b>Sign off</b>                   |                |
| Lead officer:                     | Sal Thirlway   |
| Approved by Tier 4 Manager:       | Debbie Edwards |
|                                   |                |
| <b>Moderation and/or Scrutiny</b> |                |
| Date:                             | December 2025  |

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| <b>Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating</b> (high impact – review in one-year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years) | 6 months – June 2026 |
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**Please forward the completed Equality Analysis to the Equality and Diversity Managers for publishing on the Council's website**