

GMCA GRANT AWARD

Grant Reference No	GMCA 640 – Autism in Schools
Cost Centre	CC 2626 SEND
Report For	Steve Wilson
Report Author	Lesley Rudge
Directorate	Public Service Reform
Date	19/12/2022
Grant Value	£399,136
Funding Period	September 2022-July 2023

Grant Title: Greater Manchester Autism in Schools Project

OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND

Autism in Schools Project was built on the work and learning from the North Cumbria and Northeast Accelerator Schools Autism Project. The Accelerator project aimed to reduce inappropriate educational exclusions and hospital admissions for children and young people with learning disabilities, autism spectrum conditions and/or challenging behaviour. This is a transformation programme and aims to promote whole school cultural change and understanding of autism. The project was rolled out in Greater Manchester in 2021 in four local authorities and is continuing in phase 2 in 2022-23 to include 4 further GM local authorities.

In September 2023 Greater Manchester phase 2 was awarded £118,000 of grant funding from the national Autism in Schools Project.

GM ICB agreed a further £281,136.00 of support for the project

There are 3 elements to the Project

Building relationships and networks of support:

Parent carer forum representatives are key partners in the project and lead family support and parent groups in schools. Parent groups have been extremely well attended in each area increasing opportunities for parents of autistic children and young people to socialise, connect and network. Schools have worked with parents in changing SEND policy. There has also been a marked increase in SEND Parent Carer Forum membership.

Learning opportunities for schools.

Learning modules have been rolled out on a whole school basis and shared with parent and carers. Feedback suggests that the 'one message for all' approach is supporting pupils to feel understood, accepted and happier at school.

MHST have been a key partner in the project and have brought advice and information to schools and continue to build relationships with schools.

Autism self -awareness and skills development, hearing the voice of young people:

Each school devised a bespoke 'Understanding Myself' offer for CYP and their peers. Discussion around understanding Autism has been rolled out in whole school assemblies, classrooms and in group work. Work has been carried out to develop friendship groups specifically for autistic children and young people and for wider peer groups.

SCOPE OF GRANT

The overall purpose of the grant is to provide funding directly to targeted local authorities, parent carer forums and schools to facilitate roll out of the project to ensure greater understanding of autism in children and young people and to meet the objectives as follows:

- Increase in school attendance levels for autistic young people with SEN or EHCP
- Reduction in the number of young people on part time timetables
- Reduction in permanent and fixed term exclusion for autistic young people with SEN or EHCP
- Increase in the percentage of autistic pupils with SEN or EHCP meeting their short term targets
- Reduction in admissions for tier 4 beds for children and young people with autism targets

ALLOCATION PROCESS

The Grant Agreement ensures distribution of funds from GMCA to individual Local Authorities as a single grant payment. GMCA will oversee the roll out of the project and GMCA's involvement will provide a better opportunity for communities to share their experiences, system failures and ideas for solutions with commissioners, funders and policy makers across GM.

The learning from this experience will be shared within GMCA and with other funders to encourage more cross-collaboration so resources can be shared more equitably and devolved to communities as appropriate.

FINANCE REVIEW

Funding for year 1 Autism in Schools Project has already been received, year 2 funding will run from September 2022 to July 2023

There are no restrictions beyond the overall aims and principles of the programme

We anticipate that grant funding will be awarded in 1 single payment to each participating Local Authority to the value of as follows:

Phase 1 (continuation) Manchester; Oldham; Rochdale and Wigan
£167,815 (£41,953 per LA)
Phase 2. Bury; Salford; Stockport and Trafford
£141,210 (£35,303 per LA)

£79,000 to be retained by GMCA for funding of:
Commissioned project lead support
Training support materials
Evaluation of Project (via Council for Disabled Children)

Evaluation of funding will take place mid-point of the project (February 2023) and at close of project (July 2023) to ensure accountability.

BENEFITS / SAVINGS

In addition to the specific aims and benefits in terms of the national metrics highlighted additional benefits and value that this investment agreement brings:

- A focus on transforming lives of children and young people with autism across Greater Manchester in a way that is achievable, sustainable and long term
- Providing best value for GM by 'doing things once' and embedding, spreading and scaling knowledge, learning and shared resources
- Providing further testing to this model of transforming the lives of children and young people with SEND and their families at neighbourhood, community and locality levels

- Bringing in national investment to GM.

RISKS / ISSUES

Fixed term contracts of children's services project manager and commissioned project support from AiS National Project. (Fixed term until April 2023 July 2023 respectively)
Capacity of Local Authority Parent Carer Forum leads
Capacity of MHST Teams to support project.
Non recurrent funding

PROCUREMENT

This is a grant allocation to embed and support the current expansion of GM Autism in Schools Project across the GM region, it will fall under the Light touch regime CPV Code 80000000-4 Education & Training services, and therefore the grant allocation of £399,136 falls below the light touch threshold.

A review has been undertaken in terms of the new Subsidy Control act and these payments have been evaluated and deemed not to be a subsidy under the regime

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve award of the Grant to GMCA to be distributed as follows:

Manchester; Oldham; Rochdale and Wigan £167,815 (£41,953 per LA)

Bury; Salford; Stockport and Trafford £141,210 (£35,303 per LA)

APPROVED BY	
POSITION	(on behalf of Chief Officer)
DATE	
SIGNATURE	

APPROVED BY	Steve Wilson
POSITION	GMCA Treasurer
DATE	11/01/2023
SIGNATURE	