

DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

13th October 2020

ITEM NO. 6

SCHOOL FORUM (EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER UPDATE) OUTREACH SERVICES UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform School Forum of changes in specifications where appropriate and considerations for future outreach service delivery.

Outreach Services – Changes

2. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions all outreach services have been offering virtual advice and support currently, except for the Low Incidence Service which is still providing a statutory support service to children and young people with hearing and visual impairments. The Education Service has developed with the Public Health team Safe System of Work guidance for visits to schools and settings who is due to be issued shortly.
3. **Cognition and Learning Service** (Beaumont Hill Academy) – this service no longer provides support to the LA on s17 assessment for children and young people with multi-sensory impairment. There has been a small reduction in the budget of the service as a result.
4. **Speech and Language Outreach** (Northwood Primary School) – the S&L outreach was re-launched in 2019 and has been offering focused support for settings to adopt a ‘communication friendly school’ approach. The model is based upon work done by the Communication Trust and other specialist speech and language training programmes such as ELKLAN. Schools are also able to access a ‘communication friendly schools’ audit that can support them in developing their practise in this area.
5. **Social Communication Outreach Service** (Hurworth School). The service continues to provide a high level of support to students and schools throughout the LA.

Over the course of the last 3 years the service has worked in partnership with all Darlington Secondary Schools, 29 Darlington Primary Schools, Home & Hospital and Rise Carr with a 3-year trend demonstrating a sustained increase in number of pupils being supported over last 3 years [Sept 2017-March 2020]. The total of number of Primary and Secondary school pupils supported by SCOS in 2019-20 was 182 pupils compared to 158 in 2017-18. In September 2020 the service shows that the current number of pupils being supported is Primary (88) and Secondary (92) a total of 180.

The service is staffed by colleagues from Hurworth Secondary School, Beaumont Hill and Mount Pleasant Schools; if the shortage in funding is not addressed then the sessions available from the service as a whole would fall from 21 sessions per week to 12.64 sessions and the number of students supported would be almost halved.

In addition to student and staff support the service provided training/support from September 2019 to March 2020 in the following areas:

1. The use of the Autism Education Trust [AET] Progression Framework for tracking progression in pupils with autism / social communication needs [offered to all schools]
2. Meeting the needs of Autistic pupils in mainstream schools [offered to all ASD Leads]
3. Partnership working with Speech and Language Therapy service
4. Whole school staff training on ASD [West Park]
5. A Person-Centred approach to the Recovery Curriculum for pupils with ASD [during COVID19.

The service has been with an income shortage of circa 25k for a number of years; the shortage for 2020/21 is £26,381pa and it is recommended that funding be increased to address the shortfall and allow the SCOS to operate at its current level.

6. All the above services can be accessed through making a referral via the Local Authority referral forms (the LINS referral is separate) (<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/darlington-special-educational-needs-service/additional-information/information-for-sencos/referral-forms-and-blank-templates/>). The information on the website is in the process of being updated as at the time of writing.
7. **Traveller Education and Attainment Service** (The Rydal Academy) – the service successfully supported the LA to deliver the ‘Moving On, Aiming High!’ careers aspirations project for Gypsy, Roma Traveller Electively Home Educated young people and continue to work closely with the LA Inclusion Team service. In 2020/21 the family support element of the service will be further developed. The service continues to provide support to schools for cultural awareness and can offer virtual training.

Recommendation

8. The School Forum are asked to note the activities as outlined in this report and support the funding recommendation for the Social Communication Outreach Service.