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**SCHOOL FORUM OFFICER – WORK UPDATE**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to update School Forum on the review of the High Needs services and related activity.

**Progress To Date**

2. The second round of monitoring Resource Bases is taking place. The spring panel will consider a review of children's targets and progress, and a robust consideration of the children who need more/less support, ready for exit/transition. All bases except Heathfield are full, and are planned to remain so in 2016/17. A review of places in the summer term will lead to the commissioning of places for 2016/17. Schools will be notified as soon as possible.
3. Presentations on the resource bases and outreach services were provided at the last SENCo network meeting and routes for referral and eligibility criteria were explained. These were based on the new contract arrangements.
4. The **Social Communication Outreach Service (SCOS)**, ran ASD Leads training in summer term which focussed on developing understanding of the nature of ASD, as well as the strategies and resources which can be used in schools. The autumn term training provided opportunities for observation of good practice in specialist provision. Evaluations of the training to date shows:
  - 80% of participants have increased confidence and better understanding of ASD and identification of needs; children appear to be less anxious, more settled and able to self-regulate better than before;
  - 45% of ASD leads have delivered specific ASD training to other staff, or have used staff meetings as a means to disseminate information and over 50% have reported an improvement in classroom environment and differentiation;
  - 75% of schools have required Head Teacher / Management support to implement the approaches and training.

The consensus is that more work needs to be done to ensure a consistent approach in schools, with a whole school commitment and bespoke training required. Over half of those that responded found that trying to find training time which has not already been allocated in order to embed the approaches across school is a key barrier to progress.

Workshops are now available to increase knowledge in key related areas, the training will also cover levels of need that would be expected for SENCos to refer to CAMHS.

As a consequence it could be said that schools would seem to be meeting low level needs as part of their graduated response. The impact on referrals to the SCOS will be evaluated in the next term alongside the impact of the new co-ordinator arrangements agreed at the last School Forum meeting.

5. The **Beaumont Hill outreach service for cognition and learning** continues to be fully subscribed. The service now needs to monitor intervention times and turnaround of support provided which will contribute to the evaluation of impact in the Annual Review of the service. In-Reach to the hydro therapy pool is being more closely scrutinised and schools are asked to re-refer if children do not attend for more than a period of 3 weeks.

6. Schools need to identify children who require risk assessments due to physical needs. At the last meeting it was recommended that all schools appoint a key worker to undertake this role to liaise with the **Low Incidence Needs Service**. A new model for providing physical needs assessment training is being developed by the service, so further information will be available to SENCo's in advance of September 2017.
7. The **Travellers Education Attainment Service** contract has been finalised. This service is provided by The Rydal Academy. During the meetings with the service it has been identified that a review of how to evidence impact and to review the offer for all schools would feed into 2015/16 Annual Review of the service. The service focus is to work strategically to raise awareness about the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community and to directly impact on the achievement and attainment of GRT pupils at all stages. The service can be a valuable resource in order to promote inclusive culture, policies and practice that **all** Darlington schools will benefit from.
8. A revised specialist equipment policy has been in place since September 2015 which explains the procedures for grant applications. Schools need to contribute the first £500 of each application for equipment. An inventory of equipment has now been completed and will be checked before any new equipment is ordered.
9. The School Forum officer has attended the Darlington cross agency Commissioning and Development Autism Plan meetings. The key issue for education to consider is around transition to adult services and therefore the Post 16 team will attend the meetings in future.
10. A review of SEMH provision has been agreed as necessary for Darlington and an initial scoping meeting with officers, schools and Darlington College has taken place. It was discussed at this meeting that the schools ASD review will be part of this wholesale review of provision. The meetings will be attended by the School Forum officer.
11. The contractor who supports the Multi Agency Provision Panel (MAPP) and Resource Base panel has provided valuable reports in order to improve processes. As a result SENCo's have been provided with more guidance. If this is followed and paperwork submitted by the right dates, informed decisions can be made that are right for the child and fulfil statutory duties. These improvements will feed into the SEND self-evaluation (see para 12).
12. The School Forum officer is involved in the preparation for the SEND Area Inspection and sits on the work streams for data; schools; colleges and joint commissioning. This work is commencing with a self-evaluation. Nominations from schools have been sought to sit on the steering group for this work and work streams as applicable.
13. The School Forum officer is leading the implementation of the Future in Mind projects (see separate paper).
14. The School Forum officer completed a bid to Health Education England in order to provide extra support for early intervention training for social and healthcare workers and to extend mindfulness training to primary schools.
15. As a result of working closer with Health colleague's communication has improved, and the LA are informed of more opportunities for schools, such as training. Training for foundation, KS1 and 2 in Occupational Therapy is now available. SENCos have been informed.

### **Recommendation**

16. The School Forum to note progress on review of services and monitoring activity and other related joint commissioning activity.

**Eleanor Marshall - School Forum Monitoring & Support Officer**