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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, Commissioning and SEN Policy related activity.

**Background**

2. To make best use of DSG resources, services need to be regularly reviewed against appropriate specifications, budgets and targets. Ongoing monitoring against these specifications can then identify the extent to which the activities are delivering what is required, enabling the School Forum to be in a better position to make decisions on future funding i.e. which services are to be commissioned or de-commissioned.

**Progress to Date**

**High Needs Services – Reviews**

3. At the May meeting the initial report into the review of the Social Communication Outreach Service (SCOS) was made. This report has now been finalised and attached at Appendix B. The recommendations made to the School Forum in May are being actioned as explained in paras 4 and 5 below.
4. The Manager of Resource Provision at Hurworth Secondary School (also ASD/SCOS co-ordinator), has implemented a new model of outreach support which focuses on the use of a training programme, to build capacity within schools to enable identified staff to implement strategies of support for pupils with ASD/SCD. All schools now have ASD leads, who attended wave one of training, which has been very well received. The impact of the training will be evaluated by the School Forum Officer alongside monitoring of the outreach service. The aim is that referrals to the service decrease allowing capacity to meet resource base demands.
5. The Beaumont Hill Outreach service has been under subscribed but as reported to the May Forum meeting, the SCOS was under pressure from high numbers of referrals. This is being addressed by training as explained above, however, the possibility is that some children may have been eligible for the Cognition and Learning Service. To date only a small number of children have been referred, both directly from schools and via SCOS. Therefore, this service will re-launch to schools and will be under review.
6. The Mount Pleasant Resource Base has also been reviewed with no significant issues or areas of change required to their operation. The base is full and staff have had many requests from parents to visit the base already this term.
7. The outcome of the reviews of the SCOS, and the Mount Pleasant Resource Base show that there is a 'gap' in provision between primary and secondary. This requires further investigation and work will commence on an ASD strategy for Darlington this term.
8. The Heathfield resource base has been reviewed with no significant issues reported or areas of change required to its operation.

9. Low Incidence Needs Service (LINS) - Due to the retirement of the VI teacher (who also was responsible for moving and handling, risk assessment and medical needs advice), the LINS managed by Hurworth Primary School, are investigating different models of delivery. As an interim, support is being provided by a VI teacher from Middlesborough (Sunnyside Academy) and a permanent VI teacher is being recruited with interviews in late-October scheduled. The School Forum officer will be involved in the recruitment process. The Darlington and Durham Foundation Trust have seconded an occupational therapist who is reviewing current need and will propose a model for delivery for moving and handling and risk assessment, and has fed into the specialist equipment policy which will be launched when this review has concluded.
10. Contracts (in the case of Academies) and Service Level Agreements have now been issued for 2015/16.
11. Income and expenditure analysis has been received for most of the services. Budget meetings will clarify this for 2015/16 and a position will be provided for the January meeting of the School Forum.
12. Schools have received updated information in the SEN Information file on access to outreach services, and the 'what, why, when and how to access resource bases and outreach services are provided in short briefs in the file. These will be adapted for the local offer.

### **High Needs Services Monitoring**

13. The reviews have led to a change in monitoring and reporting to ensure consistency of approach. This will lead to better identification of need and strategic decision making. A summary of the new monitoring and reporting framework is attached at Appendix B.
14. Specific details are required per child/young person on outcome and performance measures. These should reflect the progress made (eg attainment and achievement data) as well as those relating to social, emotional, attitudinal and behavioural issues, amount of inclusion in mainstream classes, attendance at after school activities, contribution to school etc.
15. Reserved provision for pupils with SEN is the single legal category which includes both resource provision and designated SEN units. Children and young people benefiting from resource base support must spend more than half of their time in mainstream classes **with** support. As such it is necessary to evidence the support provided per child/young person and a pupil plan has been developed which can be used or a resource base can provide a provision map for each child. This information will complement the One Plan and should be completed by the Resource Base as soon as practicably possible prior to the first monitoring visit.
16. A similar monitoring and reporting is required for the outreach services. The services will review with schools the interventions they have recommended, as schools are responsible for putting these into place.

### **Resource Base Provision Panel - Changes**

17. Following the review of resource base provision the Local Authority (LA) has introduced some changes to the review and planning for resourced places by the implementation of a resource base provision panel which will ensure that places are assigned according to prioritisation of need rather than on a first come first served basis.. The Multi Agency Provision Panel meetings will consider requests for EHC plans and special school placements as normal however requests for resource bases will no longer be considered at this meeting.

18. The new resource base provision panel will:
- Agree where children/young people should enter the resource base
  - Agree where children/young people should exit a resource base to mainstream school, or to other special provision referring to the Multi-Agency Provision Panel where appropriate;
  - Receive reports from the Resource Bases on children's progress in order for the LA to monitor and forward plan high needs places and budget;
  - Receive reports from the relevant outreach services as to ongoing need for support in Darlington in order to guide strategic decisions on high needs places and budget;
  - Review demand to inform the Commissioning process.
19. The School Forum monitoring officer will meet quarterly with each Resource Base prior to the panel and report on resource base progress including a report on outreach support where appropriate. A LA SEN Case Officer will provide independent advice on suitability of support provided by resource base to meet child/young person's needs and the RB manager will be in attendance to present report on children/young people's progress and issues for consideration for planning placements.

### **SEN Policy and Support**

20. A new SEN Information and Support file has been launched with SENCo's. This file contains Graduated Response guidance and all the updated information on Resource Bases alongside changes to the One Plan, and EHC processes. It will be available online via a portal for schools, but this is currently in development, therefore, any updates will be provided via email.
21. The graduated guidance links the consistency of quality first teaching with the new SEN Code, through the plan, do, review cycle. It gives the SENCo support to develop the whole school approach eg in the development of training. The guidance was trialled by Reid Street Primary school. It was found to be practical and welcomed in order to differentiate teaching.
22. The intention is that the SENCo network is used to share practice and review/evaluate the guidance during this Academic Year.

### **High Needs Services - Budgets**

23. Work has commenced on how to standardise the reporting of the high needs services budgets. The use of the new monitoring tools (pupil plan, and annual reporting), will ensure that through this Academic Year, a focus is given to consistent reporting of support provided per contact hour which could be used for a value for money calculation. However more work and consultation needs to be undertaken as to how support costs should be calculated.
24. Budget meetings have been requested that will commence this discussion.
25. The aim is that guidance will be provided on eligible support costs and working alongside the provision mapping project to define eligible top up costs for resource bases.

### **Traded Services to Academies**

26. The School Forum officer has worked with DBC legal department and other services to align some service level agreements for DBC traded services to Academies. The arrangements for maintained schools remain the same.

27. This has been put into place to avoid the need for a large number of separate contracts to facilitate each parties understanding and management of the services on offer. The contract is drafted on the same terms as the Council uses in the services which is purchased from third parties. The departments have agreed to provide services on an Academic year basis.
28. The intention is for 2016/17 to have all service departments included in the bulk contract on the same basis.

### **Future in Mind – Darlington Transformation Plan 2015-20**

29. The School Forum officer has continued to attend the Darlington Joint Commissioning Group for Children's Services. The first action for this group was to map commissioned children's services in Darlington and identify which services are currently joint commissioned, and timescales on existing contracts and commission plans.
30. As a consequence of this activity three key priorities were identified. One of these is Darlington's response to the principles set out in 'Future in Mind', NHS England's strategy for support for Children and Young People's mental health and wellbeing. This requires that a transformation plan is developed for all CCG areas which should cover the full breadth of local service provision, with specific deliverables for which additional funding has been allocated, including a ring-fenced amount for Eating Disorder Services. The development of the plan is led by the CCG.
31. The 'Future in Mind' strategy emphasises the importance of schools in supporting children and young people to develop resilience and good emotional and psychological health. The proposals are that mental health services develop links to schools through named contacts with the aim of making mental health support more visible and easily accessible, and to improve communication.
32. With this joint commissioning in mind the transformation plan task group designed and conducted a survey monkey questionnaire for all schools. This aimed to gain a baseline of provision delivered within schools as well as gain an insight into where schools felt the gaps are and how future provision should be directed.
33. The survey was designed with input from Alison Maddison, Head of School at Hurworth Primary, who sat on the task group, as well as PHSE and SEN leads. The survey was sent electronically to schools in July 2015. 22 schools responded, a 52% return rate; this consisted of 3 secondary schools and 19 primary schools.
34. It was found that policies to encourage a positive culture and promote good mental health rated highly as being in place in schools. There was support for the concept of a whole school approach. The three top areas identified by school's for improvement was for specific mental health training for staff; counselling/support and training for parents. These responses have informed the resilience, prevention and early intervention action plan within the transformation plan so there is a specific action to provide training for school staff which will include the roles of health care professionals and referral pathways. In order to promote resilience, there is also an action to produce an endorsed/approved menu of resources/guidelines which will encourage consistency but still allow for individuality with schools.
35. The transformation plan will be agreed by the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board and funding released if plans meet assurance criteria, by mid November 2015. The plan will be published on the Darlington Borough Council website and schools will be informed of this when it is available.

## Conclusions

36. The consensus across all reviews is that the demand on most of the services is increasing, requiring different approaches to meet these needs. An initial review of budgets indicates that in some cases expenditure exceeds income, but some changes are being made to service delivery in-term so a position will be provided to the school Forum for January budget decisions.
37. Staffing changes have created an opportunity to make changes and improvements in the medium term to services, and liaising with health (including Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy), has led to a readiness to provide interim support which will be under review, but longer term solutions may be required which may give the opportunity to consider different models of delivery.
38. Where services and resource bases are under subscribed these will be under review this term. It is hoped that initial findings can be reported to the School Forum in January and implications to budgets can be discussed.
39. The changes to the resource base approvals process should help identify children most in need and provide a more evidence based approach as schools need to evidence the actions taken to support children and young people.
40. New procedures, such as the resource base panel, will be evaluated after the first term to identify any areas for improvement.
41. Using the costed provision maps it is hoped that an evaluation of resource base top up costs and support per pupil can be evidenced. This will contribute to informed decision making by the resource base provision panel.
42. Concern was expressed in consultation over the previous year that responsiveness and flexibility of outreach support may suffer because of lack of capacity. This can now be monitored more effectively.
43. Schools need to report the impact of resource base provision on a child's/young person's academic progress in the context of 'Assessing Without Levels'. The School Forum officer has agreed that flexibility is required and as long as progress can be ascertained, mapping against peers progress and similar pupils with SEN, providing qualitative commentary, this is acceptable.
44. A dialogue has been commenced with Darlington Association on Disability. Parents/carers will be invited to meetings which are intended to report the outcome of the reviews, the changes to resource base planning, review potential changes required to the local offer and in order to consult on the development of an ASD strategy.

## Next Steps

45. Immediately:

- Review local offer pages on the LA website/information available on services to ensure access criteria and threshold information is clear, concise and accessible to all.
- Consultation with DAD parents/carers forum.

46. Medium Term:

- Scope ASD Provision Review leading to an ASD Strategy to inform direction of travel for ASD in Darlington, this will include a data review, consultation and engagement with parents, health (including the context of the CCG CAMHS review)

- Review with SENCOs the SEN Information File

47. Ongoing:

- Monitor resource base and outreach services provision (including LINS)
- Budget meetings to gain clarity on income/expenditure positions for 2015/16
- Develop costed provision maps for resource base pupils

**Recommendation**

48. It is recommended that Members of the School Forum:

- (a) Note the progress on review of services;
- (b) Note the next steps

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