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**LOW INCIDENCE NEEDS SERVICE REVIEW**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To update Schools Forum regarding the review of the Low Incidence Needs Service (LINS).
2. The service takes the form of a designated provision managed by the Heathfield Multi Academy Trust. The service is based at Hurworth Primary School.
3. Appendix A outlines key messages and issues, and this paper presents the conclusions and recommendations from the review.

**Summary of Support**

4. The service supports children and young people ages 0-16, with visual and hearing impairment. Children with Down Syndrome and children with a physical and/or medical need receive support from ages 5-16. All support is on an outreach basis, primarily in mainstream, some in special provision.
5. To ensure children with physical or medical needs can access the national curriculum, they and their teacher/teaching assistant/school SENCo, needs a variety of support as outlined in the accompanying report.

**Review – Key Findings**

6. The key findings are summarised below. The full scope of the service and detail from the data review, findings from in-service discussions and interviews are outlined in the accompanying report (Appendix A).

6.1 Current Position

- The LINS is an enhanced service which promotes inclusion and ensures children are getting high quality support in their mainstream schools.
- A new service specification has been agreed and forms the basis of the 2014/15 contract (attached as Appendix B). A review of the current contract is in progress with legal services and the specification will be finalised at this time.
- Performance Indicators have been reviewed, new indicators set and agreed, as set out in the specification.
- The service caseload as at December 2014 is provided (attached at Appendix C) and sets the benchmark for review and monitoring on an annual basis, in the Autumn term.

- A continuous improvement plan for the service has been agreed.

## 6.2 Scope of Service

- Provision for 0-16 low incidence needs is available *up to transition* but *does not* extend beyond 16 to all providers. The Teacher of Deaf provides support on request to Darlington College, at present there is one young person on the caseload.
- The service *does not* provide for children and young people with down syndrome ages 0-2 and 16-25.
- The service does not support moving and handling training in Early Years settings.
- The service is primarily for mainstream where LIN is the child's primary need, however, support is provided at Beaumont Hill Academy for example children requiring audiology support.
- An outreach service from Beaumont Hill is provided for children below statutory school age with complex needs and supports the work of the Early Years advisory teacher.
- The service can provide other support (including dyslexia/dyspraxia assessment), because staff have the relevant skills and experience, but this is not offered as part of the core service. Roles may or may not have the capacity to do so in the future subject to the demand of statutory service provision.
- Due to changes in the OT health contract, it is a necessity that the service undertake school environmental assessments for provision of equipment and adaptations. The demand is low at present, and this should be monitored.
- For pre-school, the Early Years Inclusion service would identify if an environmental assessment is required in a PVI setting, and make provision funded through the early years panel arrangement.
- The LA Life Stages team work with families of children requiring social support from 'cradle to grave'. This team would support families with children having high needs to access the LINS.

## 6.3 Criteria for Access

- Support and access to the service is based primarily on the national guidelines set by (NatSIP<sup>1</sup>). This is favoured by other LA's and is useful for benchmarking purposes. The NatSIP guidelines set the support provided for children with mild, moderate, severe and profound sensory impairment. The service fundamentally follows these guides with a degree of flexibility.
- The number of visits for the children on caseload is currently meeting NatSIP guidelines and sufficient capacity is provided to support children and young people with mild to profound impairment from the early years, including support to children

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<sup>1</sup> National Sensory Impairment Partnership

of newborn hearing impaired children, throughout mainstream primary and secondary school.

- Communication of the core service offer and criteria needs to be clear to manage expectations of both settings and families involved. The service improvement plan requires that a communication policy, and review of the service information booklet and information on the local offer pages are in line with the service specification.

#### 6.4 Value for Money

- A total of 175 children and young people receive support which equates to £1,222 per child which is value for money in comparison with schools using their SEN allocation to support these children if the service was not doing so.
- In comparison with other services reviewed, the staff and premises costs are the majority of the budget allocation.

#### 6.5 Performance

- Participation in the NatSIP benchmarking programme evidences that Children and Young People supported by the LINS are making, in the main, better or equal to the national average of progress.
- For children at KS1-2 with moderate hearing and visual loss, progression is better than the national average. For KS2-4 and above, progress varies from above to below the national average, but results are expected in line with circumstances and learning targets.

#### 6.6 Data Review

- A large number of children and young people are supported without being on the SEN register. There are significantly more children supported with hearing loss than are on the SEN register.
- SEN data cannot be relied upon to give a whole picture of the need in Darlington, however, we can be confident that all children with low incidence needs are identified via referral routes and recorded by the service whether or not they have SEN.
- Support for transition 16-19 will at least remain the same for this Academic Year, but data indicates this will increase by 2016/17.

#### 6.7 Risk

- Because the service is very small and relies on key individuals to have the expertise to deliver each element of the service, the main risk to service delivery is staff retention and recruitment.

## Conclusions

7. **The LINS is an enhanced service which promotes inclusion and ensures children are getting high quality support in their mainstream schools.**
8. The service is currently meeting national guidelines and sufficient capacity is provided to support children and young people throughout early years, primary and secondary school through to transition.
9. The review service specification and review of indicators will enable the service to be effectively reviewed and monitored going forward.
10. There is sufficient delivery capacity to give the appropriate support *based on current demand* however it is not possible to increase the scope of the service beyond transition from 16-25 to all providers.
11. The service level agreement in place with Beaumont Hill Academy will be reviewed with the Head Teacher and the LINS service.
12. Participation in the NatSIP benchmarking programme evidences that Children and Young People supported by the LINS are making, in the main, better or equal to the national average of progress.
13. SEN data cannot be relied upon to give a whole picture of the need in Darlington, however, we can be confident that all children with low incidence needs are identified via referral routes and recorded whether or not they have SEN.

## Points for Discussion

14. The current delivery model is driven by the structure set by NatSIP. There is sufficient delivery capacity to give the appropriate support for children that meet *every* level of the criteria, from mild to profound.
15. In a review of Local Authority provision<sup>2</sup>, 85% of all Local Authorities use NatSIP guidelines to assess children from mild to profound impairment. Some LA's have withdrawn support from those with mild impairment, and pupils with complex needs in special schools have had their service support reduced or withdrawn in some LAs over the past year. However, other LAs have increased support to certain groups of pupils including pupils in special schools.
16. Delivery capacity is sufficient for the current demand. It is not possible to increase the scope of the service from 16-25 to all providers, or for 0-2 in the case of Down Syndrome at this present time.

## Recommendations

17. The School Forum should note:

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<sup>2</sup> RNIB January 2015

- The current delivery position and benchmark indicators which form a basis for monitoring.
- An improvement plan will be implemented, and the service should update service information based upon this review and work with the Local Authority to review the Local Offer .

18. The School Forum should consider points for discussion 14-16 and discuss:

- Is the level of support the preference for all schools?
- Do providers of 16-19 education require more support than is already provided?
- Do schools/providers believe the need exists for other support related to low incidence needs, eg dyslexia/dyspraxia assessment.

Subject to discussions, that in liaison with the Executive Head, the officer can develop delivery models which address these preferences and cost each model.

19. The School Forum to consider progress at the June 2015 School Forum meeting.

**Eleanor Marshall**  
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