

# DARLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

ITEM NO 6

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## SCHOOL FORUM MONITORING AND SUPPORT OFFICER ROLE OBJECTIVES AND KEY ACTIVITIES

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to update School Forum on the role of the Monitoring and Support Officer.

### **Background to Role**

2. The changing environment of schools funding, roles and responsibilities has meant that School Forum take a greater role in setting the agreements for DSG spend.
3. This has moved the Forum to a 'Commissioning Group' arrangement, taking decisions about spend of DSG based on clear evidence of need to deliver the outcomes that matter to children and young people.
4. To make best use of DSG resources, services need to be regularly reviewed against appropriate specifications, budgets and targets. Ongoing monitoring will identify the extent to which the activities are delivering what is required.
5. The SEN Code of Practice also makes clear that evidence is required about which services, support and interventions are effective (3.30); that there are sufficient services available to meet needs (6.60); and that schools work with the LA to agree the range of specialist local services (6.61).
6. By putting into place review and monitoring of services, School Forum will be in a better position to make decisions on future funding i.e. which services are to be commissioned or de-commissioned.

### **Role Objectives**

7. The core objective for the role is to review services which include those in the 'Local Offer' which sit within schools and are directly managed by schools, to identify:
  - a) what provision exists; whether it is of high quality and meets local current needs;
  - b) if and how they can be improved;
  - c) if not, why not and what needs to be done
8. The review will clarify for all schools what the services actually deliver to ensure placements are relevant.
9. The 'other' responsibilities of the officer will be to liaise between LA and School Forum in the case or need to co-ordinate actions following decisions taken at meetings.

## **Role Activities**

10. Based upon recommendation by the School Forum, a priority list of services will be identified (e.g. Resource Bases, Low Incidence Needs).
11. The officer will approach head teachers and service co-ordinators to arrange an initial meeting. The officer will spend time with specialist teachers/relevant staff to understand the service and any linked services (e.g. NHS).
12. The officer will support the service complete a review form (see Appendix 1) which will summarise how the service performed for 2013/14. This will evaluate the successes and learning from 2013/14 and gain clarity on delivery and targets for 2014/15.
13. Initially contracts/SLAs will be reviewed and agreed, the review will no doubt touch on learning for the future, and any changes that can be made to improve the service
14. Northwood Primary School, Speech and Language base have been contacted and welcome a review and further discussions including trial of the review form
15. In time, the process may also review EHC plans to see if the services are relevant in enabling children and/or young people to achieve their desired outcomes.
16. The evidence will be compiled within a commissioning plan to outline what the local needs are; what services currently meet these needs, how they can be best delivered, to identify the gaps in provision and how they are best commissioned.
17. As services have been set up for some time, the commissioning of any new services, or changes to current services will be agreed for implementation in Academic Year 2015/16 at the earliest, within the context of budgets set in March 2015 for April 2015-March 2016. It may be possible to implement changes in 2015/16 with budget changes to be in the FY 2016/17.
18. The commissioning plan will lead to School Forum decisions on whether to continue services in the same way and how to better target resources for 2016/17. This feeds into the agreement of budgets for 2016/17 and 'catches up' with the cyclical commissioning process.
19. The principles of fairness, consistency and transparency need to be in all activities. Updates on progress will be provided at all School Forum meetings.
20. Decisions on service commissioning will be the responsibility of the Schools Forum.

## Suggested Timescale

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
1.	Review of 2013/14 services (initially priority services)	October - December 2014 (priority services)
2.	Contracting of 2014/15 services – agree reviewed service specifications, outcomes, update of contracts and SLAs etc.	January – March 2015 (priority services)
3.	Agree 2015/16 Budgets: final funding formulae for schools will be agreed - informs the High Needs budget and allocations for SEN and Assisted Provision services in 2015/16	January 2015
4.	2015/16 Commissioning Plan – resource analysis, needs assessment/gap analysis	March - June 2015
5.	Development and finalisation of 2015/16 service specifications; identification of alternatives and commissioning	July – August 2015

## Recommendation

21. It is recommended that Members of the School Forum:
- (a) Agree the suggested approach to review and commission services;
  - (b) Discuss and agree priorities;
  - (c) Note the services review form as Appendix 1;
  - (d) Note timescales.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

22. Commissioning can be defined as: *“The cycle of assessing need, planning and delivering interventions and services, reviewing their effectiveness in delivering the desired outcomes (within Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy) ..”*
23. Drivers for commissioning are;
- service users need,
  - value for money,
  - need/demand to warrant the current volume of service and/or number of providers,
  - priority – (reassessment of priorities may mean that investment is required elsewhere).
24. Normally the review or consideration of a new commission takes place when approaching the end of a current contract or when a new needs/innovation becomes apparent, although a decision may be taken at any point in the commissioning cycle to de-commission.
25. Commissioning (and decommissioning) impacts on the public and service users therefore there is the requirement for a formal process, which provides an evidence trail and ratification by a decision making authority in the face of potential appeals and legal challenge by an affected provider.
26. The commissioning cycle can be summarised as:

