
SOCIAL COMMUNICATION OUTREACH SERVICE (SCOS) – ASSISTANT CO-ORDINATOR REQUEST

Purpose of Report

1. For the School Forum to consider achievements to date in respect to the assistant co-ordinator post, and to consider request from Hurworth School of continuation of the post of Assistant Co-ordinator.

Background

2. In the first term 2016/17, 47 new referrals were made to the SCOS compared to 26 the previous *year* September 2015 to July 2016. Referrals are highest in Reception (8), year 1 (6) and year 7 (9). An interrogation of the Spring 2016 data reflects the growth in ASD as a primary need, in Reception, Year 1 and Years 5 and 6 over the previous year. Additionally there is growth in general across the SEN Support category, which could account for the high number of referrals this academic year. This would appear to be an ongoing trend.
3. Last year the SCOS requested an increase to the funding for a part time Teacher with SEND (ASD) experience to assist in the co-ordination of the service. The objective of the role was to allow current staff to concentrate on delivering the needed outreach service and embedding ASD leads training.
4. The School Forum agreed to the post, with the proviso that the *‘post will be reviewed after one full Academic Year in order to ascertain impact and evaluate future needs to ensure the service is still structured in such a way to meet Darlington school’s needs’*.
5. The SCOS service co-ordinator has confirmed that the impact of the post has been as follows:
 - through the management of the allocation of all cases, staff now maintain a balanced number of caseloads in proportion to number of days allocated. This ensures consistency for settings through deployment of the staff working with them, it promotes good practice as staff become more familiar with the policies, needs and strategies in the individual settings.
 - SCOS have now identified those pupils with higher, middle and lower level needs and respond accordingly to support ie either ‘active’, ‘under review’ or ‘consultation only’, this has impacted on the management of workloads.
 - reports are now turned around within a few days, compared to a few weeks - this has a more positive impact on the progress of interventions in settings, as well as pupil development.
 - additional monitoring support within the process of collating the data and time sheets, mean that these are kept up to date more efficiently and reported to the LA for value for money and monitoring purposes.
 - the service now has an information leaflet for parents which all ASD Leads hand to parents of new referrals.

It can be seen that the review of systems has clearly been of benefit to the efficiency of delivering the service.

Future Focus for the SCOS

6. As there is a continued increase in ASD referrals, the ASD Leads training should be re-evaluated to dig deeper into the reasons for this. An evaluation will also inform future training with the aim to extend ASD Leads knowledge and practice. The evaluation will be co-ordinated by the Local Authority in liaison with the service co-ordinator.
7. As set out in paragraph 3 the objective of the post was also to allow current staff to embed ASD Leads training. If the post is not approved the service need to make best use of time in the remainder of the Summer term to continue to evaluate systems and processes, and consideration needs to be given to category of support given which attributes to workloads. Training for ASD Leads may need to be escalated/brought forward.

Funding Request and Budget position and risks

8. The request for funding is for up to £25,000 for 2 days per week. As noted in paper 3, the carry forward into 2017/18 is £182,731. It is proposed to use this funding to offset any budget pressures arising from the introduction of the increased entitlement to 30 hours free child care in early years, and to offset high needs budget pressures within year. Funding this post will reduce the high needs funding available to offset unknown pressures that may arise during the next financial year. Paper 3 sets out the growth in high needs placements and the impact this has had on the high needs funding overspend.
9. However it should be noted that the risks of schools not receiving support in an efficient and timely way for early intervention may give way to increased pressures for individual children and school staff in the future.

Summary

10. The School Forum are asked to note the actions required to continue to develop the service and specifically the role of assistant co-ordinator to support the service to embed whole school approaches. The School Forum Officer will continue to work with the school's management team to review responsibilities in delivery of the service to contract standards.
11. The policy approach underpinning this will be for schools to ensure ASD Leads continue to embed whole school approaches of ASD training.

Recommendation

12. School Forum are requested to consider the continued funding of this post, bearing in mind overall DSG and high needs budget position and risks as set out in paragraphs 8 and 9.

Eleanor Marshall
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