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Update on the SEND Strategy – Specific learning Difficulties (SpLD) Workstream

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Forum with an update and progress report on the SpLD Workstream.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Summary of steps taken to review resources available to children and young people through educational settings to improve educational outcomes. The workstream focus is to ensure that effective and efficient services support schools to identify, assess and monitor young people experiencing SpLD to inform intervention and to recognise children and young people who may need additional provision.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Forum is invited to note and comment on the work underway to consider future roles responsibilities and configuration of SpLD outreach services (progress to date).

4. Background

- 4.1 The SpLD workstream focus is based on the recommendations of the SpLD Review and the agreed actions of the SEND Executive group Autumn term 2015.
- 4.2 The review identified that the secondary base provision was under-utilised both in terms of numbers of students 'on roll' and with respect to outreach

services offered to schools. Additionally it was acknowledged that the model of support was outdated. Offering appropriate support to students in their local community school with teachers enabled and empowered to meet need was a more appropriate model in line with SEND Code of Practice, 2015. It is expected that with appropriate understanding and practice that the needs of the majority of students experiencing SpLD can be met in mainstream educational settings.

The review further highlighted in the case of the existing ten primary 'bases' that support across the county and models of service delivery were not consistent. It was acknowledged that an updated service model was required to support streamlined equitable access to support services. Further consideration was needed to consider use of high needs funding and clarity in commissioning of services.

5. SpLD Provision

- 5.1 The SpLD workstream has broad membership from a range of educational settings, support services and includes parent representatives (appendix 1).

Key objectives:

1. To manage the process of consulting to close secondary provision, ensuring that needs of any students still attending those resources are secured whatever the outcome of the consultation process.
2. To ensure a clear interim service specification is in place for primary bases to cover the academic year (to summer 2017) specifying:
 - a) service structure;
 - b) roles and responsibilities;
 - c) model of service delivery (3 tier model);
 - d) access information;
 - e) outcomes and evaluation measures.
3. To complete a small scale research project looking at effective mainstream support from a staff and student perspective to be carried out to inform settings of good practice strategies in mainstream secondary schools.
4. To support accredited training for educational settings through providing Local Authority funding for accredited training (academic year 2016/17). Clear criteria and application process is followed and successful applicants are notified July 2017. To consider future strategies to support accredited training for staff utilising resources other than LA funding.

5. Produce proposals for remodelling the SpLD outreach services (currently 10 primary bases located in host primary schools across the county) in line with core principles:
 - a) Using a three-tiered approach, **Universal** Support for SpLD within Schools **Targeted** Support for Schools, **Specialist** Pupil-focused Interventions;
 - b) In line with efficiency and effectiveness, a reduction in overall high needs funding;
 - c) distribution of funding to support the local area need;
 - d) Using a commissioning approach through DSPLs.

5.2 Key achievements:

1. Public consultation for secondary base provision completed. Meetings and with stakeholders completed (staff / parents); detailed annual reviews of all students completed and provision agreed to support students attending secondary basis to ensure continued level of support (6 students: 4 x Y10 students; 1 x Y10; 1 x Y8). Decision taken to close 2 secondary bases with effect from 31/08/16, with the associated funding being returned to the high needs budget for re-allocation as appropriate.
2. Interim service specification for Primary SpLD bases developed and in use as working document from April 2016 acting as guidance and working service specification until summer 2017.
3. Funding for Accredited Training secured; application process completed, places offered to applicants following criteria and guidance and aiming to ensure places are across DSPL areas as much as possible. Workstream proposes that each DSPL areas could fund 2 places for accredited training year on year in the future.
4. Small scale secondary research project undertaken, initial findings and outcomes drafted. Survey to secondary schools to follow using research questions from initial study.
5. Remodelling of services in progress, in line with core principles. Service will be more consistent, utilising resources efficiently to support educational settings. A more appropriate funding model, using a model indicator to ensure parity between DSPL areas is to be implemented. Further consideration of location and numbers of staff is required to deliver services in line with new service specification.

6. It is suggested that the future resource should have a flatter structure (the workstream queried the role of base leader with small numbers of staff, set against Headteacher line manager role) which may be offset by a lead advisory teacher for all outreach teams; clarity regarding purpose and extent of administrative support; a clear and well promoted offer that sets out clearly the expectations on educational settings and outreach services (see appendix 2). Access to specialist teacher in each of 9 DSPL areas could streamline resources to include 9 rather than 10 'bases' as an example. Further discussions have considered offering services to 'double districts' which could reduce the physical number of 'bases' further. It has been agreed to consider a reduction of funding to SpLD provision in the region of 35% (and no more than 50% reduction) for modelling purposes. Timeline for implementation of changes to services from 1st September 2017 which effectively impacts budget projections from the April 2017.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Considerable progress has been made with regard to addressing the recommendations of the review.
- 6.2 The LA has undertaken a consultation of the recommendation to close the two secondary bases (located at Francis Combe and Barnwell). This was agreed and the two bases closed with effect from 31st August 2016. Careful attention has been given to ensuring the small number of students still attending Barnwell school have continued support to meet their needs which is recorded in their EHC Plans.
- 6.3 By focusing on improving the support across all schools/settings and identifying gaps in provision/changes required, the objective of the workstream is to ensure that all pupils can have their needs met within a Hertfordshire school and parents are confident in the service offer / framework, which would be expected to encompass:
- Ensuring a clear offer is promoted across the county, available to support all educational settings;
Using the tiered approach for resources in order that there are clear training and awareness-raising programmes available to ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to support children locally;
 - Specialist teaching support is available where needed for more complex cases where further assessment and identification are needed to support strategies and programmes of work for children and young people;

- Partnership working with associated professionals such as Educational Psychologists (EPs) to clarify roles and responsibilities and pathways to support.

Appendix One – Workstream Membership

Carol Kelsey (Chair: Herts Parent/Carer Involvement Group)
 Richard Haynes (Primary Head – Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School)
 Raymond McGovern (Secondary Head – St Georges)
 Julie Reddish (HCC – Commissioner)
 Kerry Scripps (DSPL Manager)
 Cherrie Demain (DSPL Manager)
 Margot Nichols (SENCO)
 Tracey Lockwood (SENCO)
 James Roach (Primary Head – Laurance Haines)
 Rob Halls (Primary Head – Thomas Coram
 Pauline Kirtley – (Head of Centre – Heath Lane)
 Rod Woodhouse – (DSPL Manager)
 Armit Bal-Richards (Primary Head – Charter Infants)
 Anna McDowall – HCC Officer (SEND Team)

Appendix Two – Tiered Approach

(Herts SpLD Outreach service – Graduated Approach)