

Education Services Update

18 June 2015

Content Applicable to;		School Phase;	
Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools	X	Pre School	X
Academies	X	Foundation Stage	X
PVI Settings	X	Primary	X
Special Schools / Academies	X	Secondary	X
Local Authority	X	Post 16	X
		High Needs	X

Purpose of Report

Content Requires;		By;	
Noting	X	Maintained Primary School Members	
Decision		Maintained Secondary School Members	
		Maintained Special School Members	
		Academy Members	
		All Schools Forum	X

- 1) This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the savings requirement for the Educational Psychology Service required as a response to savings targets set for the Children and Family Services Departments part of the Local Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 2) Provides some early information on the review of services for vulnerable children being delivered through the Local Authority's transformation programme.

Recommendations

- 3) That Schools Forum note the report.

Educational Psychology Service

- 4) As part of the MTFS Leicestershire Psychology Service is required to save £390,000; £240,000 in 2015/16 and a further £150,000 in 2016/17. The final action plan for the first stage of savings was put in place in March 2015 which, due to staff turnover, meant there were no redundancies of educational psychologists (EPs) but one teacher redundancy. The new service structure comes into place on the 1st July in order to minimise disruption of psychological services to schools. However, there have been a number of consequences from the re structure which have had a negative impact upon service delivery.
- 5) The action plan was contested by the Association of Educational Psychology (AEP) the professional body and Trade Union for educational psychologists, which led to members being balloted leading to industrial action with no end date. The action requires members to;
 - i. Not cover vacant posts
 - ii. Not provide written reports unless for statutory purposes
 - iii. Work solely to contractual hours.
- 6) The AEP have been in dispute with Leicestershire County Council which has meant that we have been unable to advertise vacancies. Trade Union action has also limited the availability of Locum support or other LA psychologists. There has been further correspondence and meetings with the AEP to try and resolve the situation and as of 9th June the industrial action has been suspended for three months.
- 7) The turnover of staff this academic year means that the Service has a number of vacancies. Some of these vacancies are being covered for the remainder of this academic year through temporary contracts and Locum. However, staffing difficulties remain acute.
- 8) Leicestershire Psychology Service (LPS) operates a time allocation system which is published annually. This is intended to provide all schools with a guaranteed and equitable number of EP visits per annum. As a result of the industrial action, there are currently 34 schools/academies without a Link educational psychologist (from April 2015). In addition there are staffing shortfalls within Early Years allocations and sessions allocated to children attending independent/non maintained special schools and the FE sector.
- 9) The recently appointed Service Manager/Principal Educational Psychologist is undertaking recruitment of educational psychologists or assistant psychologists. Further to this, all local and national employment agencies have been contacted as well as EPs who have previously offered Locum support.
- 10) The 34 Schools which do not have a named Link Educational Psychologist (EP) due to staff turnover have been contacted by letter (February 2015) and given the Service Manager's name as the point of contact. The headteachers were also invited to meet the Director and Assistant Director in order to discuss the challenges that the situation presents.

- 11) As a result of the decision by AEP to suspend industrial action we are looking to redeploy EPs to achieve a minimum of 75% delivery of sessions across the County.
- 12) Schools will be contacted again setting out what their link EP allocation will be, it should be anticipated that with a reduced service and vacancies, this will be considerably less than previously but will cover statutory assessment work for education health and care plans and a number of core functions. There will be a 'traded offer' for additional psychology service input; this could be training as well as additional assessment time. The school's link EP will work with schools to determine what this needs to be.
- 13) Schools Forum should note that it is envisaged that the Local Authority will no longer be the sole provider of psychological service input for schools and colleges. In addition to the Local Authority's Psychology Service, the department is working collaboratively with groups of schools who are looking to appoint their own educational psychologist or a joint funded appointment with the LA. Equally, neighbouring local authority psychology services which already extensively trade are looking to offer a service to Leicestershire schools.
- 14) For the additional 2016/17 saving it is intended that this be achieved by additional traded activity with schools and other internal and external partners. The service has produced a service offer from September and is currently engaging with schools to determine their requirements

Transformation of Education Services

- 15) The Local Authority established a programme of Transformation in 2014/15, one element of this programme is considering the approach to delivering education services to vulnerable groups.
- 16) A number of key design principles are underpinning this transformation which are detailed below;
 - The Local Authority is committed to a school-led system with LA as strategic partner – based upon a belief that this is the best strategy for ensuring shared accountability for improving outcomes for all children and young people.
 - The development of a robust commissioning approach focused on enabling funding to be as local as possible – across all teams and services.
 - Embedding school improvement arrangements in a self-improving system with LA monitoring and quality assuring.
 - The introduction of a commissioning framework which will underpin commissioning for school improvement and performance monitoring – with an approved list of providers now in place for September onwards.
- 17) A number of workstreams make up a comprehensive review of a number of services, whilst no MTFs savings target is attached to this work it is essential that the programme delivers effective and streamlined services. Activities are underway to;

- Review all 0-5 services to identify potential efficiencies through bringing a coherent approach to vulnerable families and a clear understanding of the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities with regard to sufficiency and quality. This will include delivering savings from DSG where changes to the allocation for funding the Free Entitlement to Early Education (FEEE) for two year olds has had an impact on the plans for service delivery. In addition, there may be new duties which emerge from the Childcare Bill.
- In Post 16 we must assess and understand the impact of the changes made by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to the funding formula. This, coupled with the changes to admissions and scope of FE colleges has potential to destabilise the current sixth form provision across the County.
- Pupils missing out on education – this is an area where costs have increased and there is increased scrutiny. A recent project is looking at costs of medical needs provision and how this can be delivered more efficiently and with better outcomes. Further work is needed to identify the impact of double funding i.e. schools are funded through their formula budget for a pupil receiving education on medical grounds but the additional cost of provision is met by the Local Authority. It is also necessary to develop better information management and reporting so increasingly accurate information.
- Elective home education is a priority area – a more robust monitoring mechanism is required and a more integrated approach is required to ensure effective working with other teams, particularly for children at risk of CSE.
- Oakfield – has developed its offer to schools to increase school-led expertise and support which is subject to a separate report on today's agenda.
- Behaviour partnerships – these continue to be successful in reducing exclusions. The service level agreement needs to be reviewed in time for July 2016 when the current one comes to an end.
- Specialist Teaching Services are currently being reviewed which is defining costs, functions and options for future options for service delivery. One objective of the review is to develop a more distinct commissioner/provider approach which will require decision in the future whether the Local Authority continues as the provider or services are directly commissioned. The review has an intention to look at an integrated commissioning approach with other teams, including health, to develop 0-25 SEND services including the Disabled Children Service and the transitions team. STS transformation links directly to the requirement to offer personal budgets through SEND reform.
- A review of the educational contributions drawn from High Needs funding to support the educational needs of children in care.

Resource Implications

18) There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Equal Opportunity Issues

19) None arising directly from this report

Background Papers

None

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