



For the attention of Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 October 2014

Dear Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Leicestershire County Council: Scale of Budget Cuts for the Educational Psychology Service.

At your meeting on 1 September 2014, Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered, at Agenda Item 10, a report from the Director of Children and Family Services entitled, 'Service Developments and Plans to Meet MTFS Savings'. The report contained an appendix i.e. 'Appendix A – 19 February 2014 County Council Meeting' (a copy is attached for your reference).

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following decision:

"That the implications of the planned programme of departmental savings across Children and Family Services, required as part of the County Council's MTFS and Transformation Programme, be noted."

In 'Appendix A' it is stated that the, 'Reduction in the Educational Psychology Service', which is reference S14, would be £240,000 for the financial year 2015/2016 and sustained at that level for 2016/2017 and again for 2017/2018.

The figure of £240,000 represents an 18% cut to the service and, consequently, unless alternatives can be found and agreed, there will be some redundancies arising from it.

However, at a meeting of a group called the 'Children and Young People's Service Transformation Board' held some 11 days earlier i.e. on 20 August 2014, which was also attended by the Director of Children and Family Services, the minutes record:

"Educational Psychology Service: The Board noted that the agreed saving for 2015/2016 was £391,000 and [would] remain for the period of the MTFS."

So that means a cut of £391,000 for 2015/2016 which will be sustained for the years 2016/2017 and for 2017/2018. We are not at all clear who "agreed" the savings of £391,000.

This is an increase in the level of the cut agreed by the democratically elected Members of Leicestershire County Council on the 19th February 2014 of some £151,000. Or put another way, it raises the cut from 18% to 29%.

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We are surprised that this 'decision' was not reported to Overview and Scrutiny and is not reflected in the minutes of your meeting.

In addition, we have looked through Leicestershire County Council's website for evidence of an 'elected Member' decision in the proceedings of meetings of the various Council Committees since 19 February 2014 that would authorise such an increase and we have failed to find one.

If there is such a minuted decision then we would be grateful if you could direct us to it.

However, if this 'decision' does not enjoy transparent elected Member support, then we would view it as being 'ultra vires' and any dismissals for reason of redundancy resulting from it would also be considered 'ultra vires' and therefore would arguably be unfair dismissals.

Finally, on your same agenda, you considered the implications of and the responsibilities arising from the Children and Families Act 2014 and allied Code of Practice published in July 2014.

Now is not the time to be cutting educational psychologists by 29% as their statutory role has been enhanced and expanded as a result of the legislative changes.


The Association of Educational Psychologists is confident that the £240,000 in savings can be achieved through income generation, if the service is allowed to trade to its capacity, and, accordingly, the impact of redundancies can be mitigated fully.

When we are eventually consulted over the savings to be made this argument will form the centre-piece of our submission.

In the meantime, we are keen to establish what the level of the savings authorised is and see the audit-trail behind that decision.

We wait to hear from you.

Yours faithfully



Stuart Moules
Regional Officer (North)

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Cc: AEP members in Leicestershire